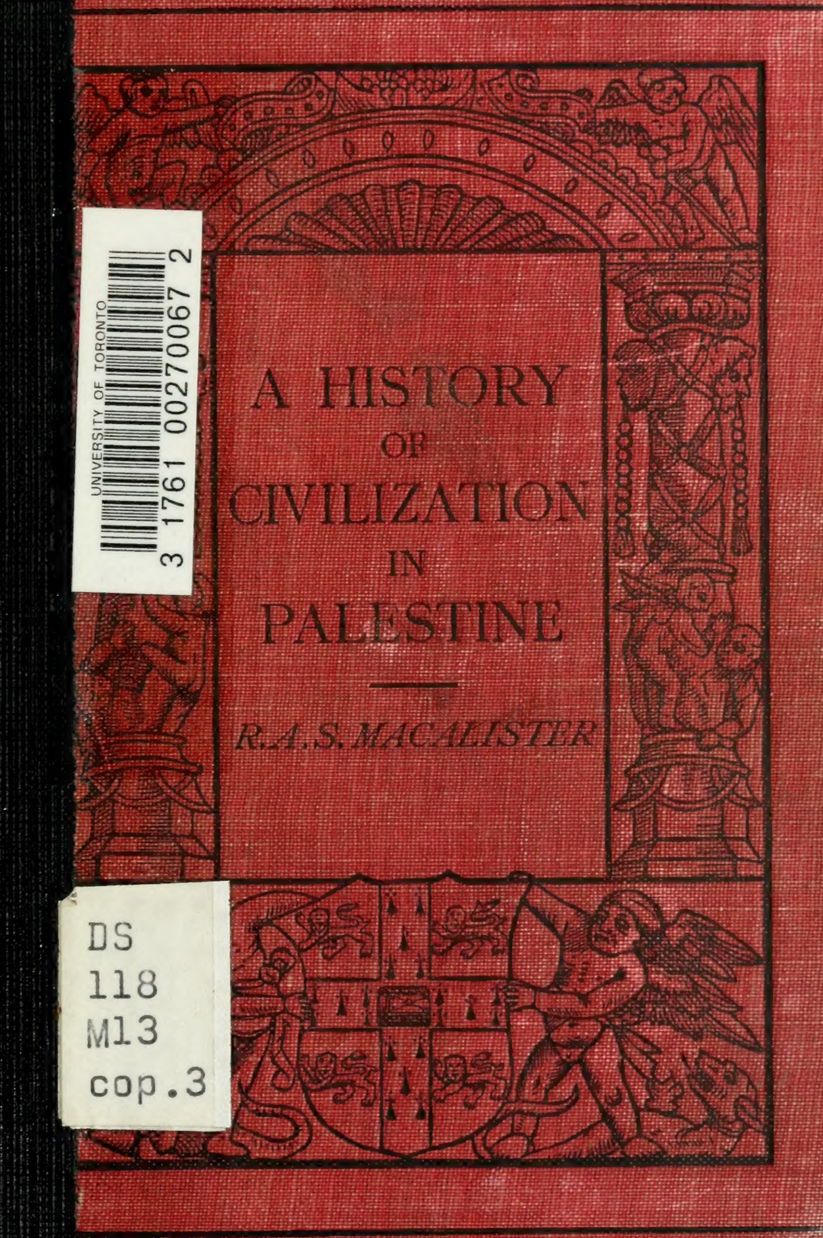

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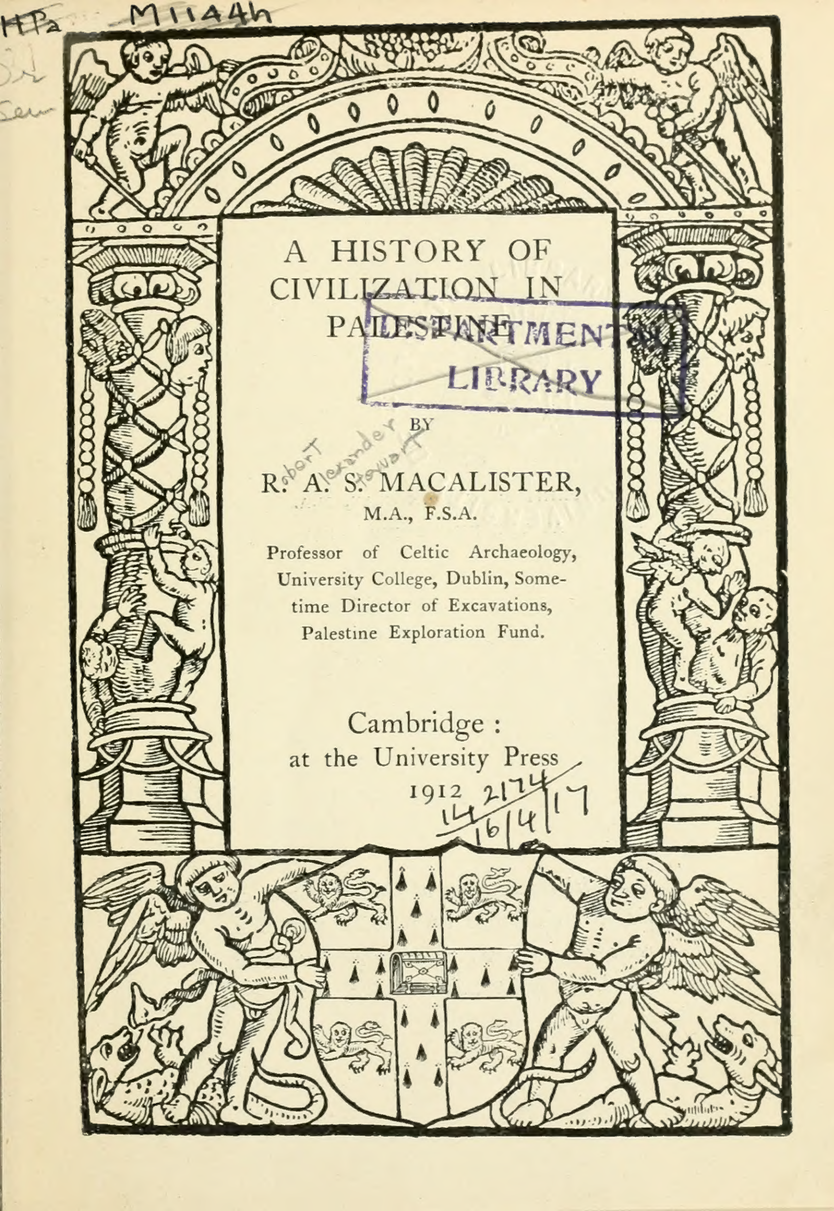
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A HISTORY OF CIVILIZATION IN PALESTINE

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PREFACE

JUST forty years ago, as we write, Captain Warren made the first experiments in excavating in Palestine. Just twenty years ago Professor Petrie closed the work with which he inaugurated the era of scientific research. When Captain Warren began his work, it was expected by many that a few strokes of the spade would settle the questionings on Biblical subjects that were then being asked with ever increasing persistence. The dreams of the subscribers centred round records of David's wars and of Solomon's glory; the Ark of the Covenant and the idols of Manasseh; some, perhaps, hoped for a letter or two written by one privileged to hear the words of Him who spake as never man spake. Nothing of the kind has come to light, however, with the single exception of the Moabite Stone—and that was not discovered by a professed explorer, but lighted upon by accident by a travelling missionary who had no idea of the value of his 'find'!

On the other hand, we now look back through vistas of history undreamt of forty years ago, and our way is illumined by strange lights breaking through from unexpected quarters. Here and there, no doubt, there are still dark corners which we may hope will some day be made clearer. We have

obtained, not a bare confirmation, but what is far better, a wider comprehension of the familiar history.

It is a disastrous mistake to imagine that the aim of excavation is the discovery of contemporary written documents. They are most important, but it is very easy to exaggerate their value, especially when we are dealing with the ancient East. The monument of a vainglorious oriental king is not less fulsome, and not more convincing, than is a modern patent-medicine advertisement. The authority of a letter depends ultimately on the personality of its unknown writer. When (as has notoriously been the case in explorations in Assyria and Babylonia) tablets and bas-reliefs are made the chief purpose of the work, the humbler utensils that speak of the life and civilization of the country are apt to be neglected, and their essential value lost for ever by the destructive processes of the excavation itself.

It is not unnatural to suppose that the special function of an excavator is to *confirm* written history, sacred or profane. If this were so he would be the most useless of men. He calls the dead of the past from their graves, and so far as he can makes them live once more their lives before the spectators: but this imaginary *anastasis* cannot persuade those who hear not Moses and the Prophets any more effectively than would an actual resurrection. His duty is not to pencil over outlines already drawn, making no

impression on the sketch: his function is to fill in the background, and to add the touches that ultimately make a perfect picture. It is from this point of view that the results of recent exploration are regarded in the following pages.

R. A. S. M.

Dublin, *March* 25, 1912.

CONTENTS

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER I

PALESTINE AND ITS EARLIEST INHABITANTS

A TRAVELLER landing at Jaffa and setting his face to the East, will in his journey pass through strangely varied scenes. The comparatively uninteresting and half-Europeanised town, from which he starts, lies surrounded by its famous orange groves, shadowed by waving palms and by sub-tropical trees and plants. These he leaves behind almost immediately. At first he traverses the plain of Sharon, a tract of magnificent fertility, yielding rich returns even to a people who have not progressed in scientific agriculture since the days of their Canaanite forefathers. After some ten or fifteen miles the scenery suddenly changes, and the traveller finds himself among rocky mountains, intersected by complex winding valleys. Many of these valleys have almost as rich possibilities as the plain, but the cultivated areas are now comparatively small. Traces of old terraces on the hill side shew that in former days there was much more extensive agricultural work

here carried on than at present. Rising among the bare and rugged hills, the traveller at last reaches the summit of the long chain on the top of which stand Jerusalem and Hebron, and which stretches from Beersheba northward to lose itself in the maze of the mountains of Ephraim. Crossing this, he finds the opposite side to be yet more desolate than that over which he has come—a waterless waste, full of hills of an outline so unearthly as to suggest the weird appearance of lunar scenery. At the bottom of the eastern slope of the chain he finds himself in the fertile but unhealthy depths of the Jordan valley. Beyond the Jordan is the steep precipitous wall that guards the pleasant uplands of Moab. Crossing these, the traveller reaches at last the great highway which year by year is trodden by the pilgrims from Damascus to Mecca. And beyond is the trackless desert.

The river Jordan, flowing from north to south, is a natural boundary between the western and the eastern parts of the journey we have imagined: and some words of description of this extraordinary river are a necessary introduction to the study of the country's physical features, with which this chapter is principally concerned. It rises in the spurs of Mount Hermon, about 1700 feet above sea-level. Several powerful springs unite to form a single stream, which, running down a marshy bed, expands, after about 10 miles from the most northerly source,

into a picturesque little sheet of water now known as the *Bahîret el-Hûleh* or 'Lakelet of Huleh.' The ancient name is lost[1]. At this point the surface is only six feet above sea-level, so that already there has been a considerable fall. Leaving Huleh it descends in a boiling torrent—dropping 687 feet in little over ten miles—and again expands, to form the lake called by the Hebrews the Sea of Chinnereth (from an unidentified region somewhere in its borders[2]) and in the New Testament known by the more familiar name of the Sea of Galilee, of Tiberias or of Gennesaret. From this it descends further, in a course so winding that though the distance in a straight line is only 60 miles, the actual length of the river is over 185. In this section it suffers a further fall of 610 feet, so that when at last it comes to an end in the bitter waters of the Dead Sea, it has sunk to a depth of nearly 1300 feet below the earth's surface. At the

[1] The current identification with the 'Waters of Merom' of Josh. xi. 5, 7, is without substantial foundation. The name does not necessarily denote a lake; more probably they were some group of mountain springs.

[2] It is popularly supposed that this name is derived from the Hebrew *kinnôr*, 'a harp,' on account of its harp-like shape. For several reasons the idea is inadmissible. The *map* of the sea looks not unlike a *modern* harp, but no one viewing the sea itself from any of the surrounding hill-tops would be struck by any such resemblance: and a name such as this is of course far older than any map. For a reference to the region of this name see 1 Kings xv. 20.

deepest part of the sea itself the soundings give an additional 1300 feet: the bottom of the valley is therefore, at its lowest point, sunk some 2600 feet below sea-level.

A very different aspect was presented by the ever-deepening valley with its rushing river and its three lakes, in the Pleistocene period—the remote beginning of the Quaternary or last of the ages of the world's geological history. The valley was then filled with a huge inland sea, extending along its whole course—the product of the drainage of the Tertiary ice-glaciers. Of this lake, the Dead Sea is the shrunken representative.

The *maritime plain* extends by the shore of the tideless Mediterranean, along the entire length of the country: its breadth, however, varies greatly at different points. At the south end it is some 35 miles in breadth, or even more. As we proceed upwards it narrows gradually, being bounded on the one side by a coast-line that trends eastward, on the other by a line of mountains running almost due north and south. At the latitude of Jaffa the breadth is about 15 miles. The mountains from this point northwards gradually approximate to the coast, till at last the spur of Carmel shoots into the sea, reducing the coast plain to the width of the causeway round the foot of the promontory. Rounding Carmel, we find ourselves at the entrance to the great plain, known in old days as

the Plain of Jezreel or of Esdraelon, and now called the Merj Ibn 'Amr—'The Plain of 'Amr's son.' This plain drives like a wedge through the mountain system, and has always been the chief highway to the interior of the country—though in winter, after heavy rain, it becomes a dangerous slough, the soft earth being turned to mud, quite deep enough in places to make the transit one of considerable risk. It is proverbially the battlefield of Palestine: so much so that it is adopted by the seer of visions on Patmos as the type of the final battlefield between the forces of good and evil (Rev. xvi. 16). North from the mouth of Esdraelon, along the sea, runs the plain, sometimes three or four miles wide, sometimes only just broad enough to give a convenient passage, and once or twice interrupted by headlands—on past Beirut and Tripoli till we leave behind us the geographical limits of Syria.

The *mountain system* is complex and bewildering to a stranger. Surely there is no place of its size elsewhere on the world's surface in which it is so easy to lose one's way! So many of the valleys look exactly alike, and all are so tortuous, that as the present writer has often experienced, the attempt to find a short cut without a guide ends often in loss of time and unnecessary fatigue. As has been already mentioned, the southern part of the mountains, those of Judaea, is much simpler than the mountain system

of Samaria. The two systems meet at a place called *Lebban*, roughly about the latitude of Jaffa.

In one respect the southern half of the mountain system differs from the northern. This is in the absence of sunken plains, surrounded completely by mountains and with little or no outlet. Such plains are found in the northern sections of the country, the most remarkable being the *Merj el-Ghuruk*, on the direct line between Nablus and Jenin—and the plain called *el-Buttauf*, in the mountains of Galilee north of Esdraelon; which may briefly be said to possess the same perplexing character as those of Samaria to the south of the plain, though the valleys as a whole are wider, the hills less rugged, and owing to the greater wealth of springs the vegetation is more permanent throughout the year. These plains are not found in the Judaean hills, which are intersected with valleys, tortuous enough, but all running definitely down to the maritime plain on the one hand and the Jordan valley on the other.

Seen from the coast plain, the Judaean mountains look like an impregnable wall, stretching continuously from north to south; and when we scale this wall and stand in Jerusalem, on its summit, another wall stretches before us, seemingly yet more forbidding, as it is also even grander and more impressive. This is the so-called 'Mountains of Moab,' which, however, are not really mountains at all, but the edge of a

lofty plateau that stretches eastward far into the desert, without a corresponding descent on the opposite side. This wall of rock, likewise, is broken by valleys, some of them, like the Mojib (Arnon), not to be matched by anything on the western side, unless perhaps it be the unearthly grandeur of the Litany cañon at the point where the huge ruins of the Crusaders' castle of Belfort command it.

The Hauran, at the northern end of this East-Jordan land, is a great granary for the whole country. The southern part, well watered with rivers and with plentiful dew, is chiefly pasture-land, in places well wooded. Rich though Western Palestine is, the possibilities of Eastern Palestine are much higher; but the country is still, as it has been from the time of the earliest records, in the hands of unprogressive Bedawin, under whom development is impossible.

In a country of aspect so varied, it is natural that the climate should display many local varieties. All possible temperature from a cold almost arctic, to a heat little short of torrid, can be experienced within the compass of half a year. On the whole, however, the climate is agreeable, and with proper precaution, healthy. The year divides naturally into two seasons, the rainy and the dry: the former is apt to be broken, without warning, by torrential rains, though between the storms days of the most perfect beauty intervene: in the dry season rain falls only by the rarest and

most extraordinary exception, though heavy dews make up for the want of moisture. The hot east wind or *sirocco* makes life uncomfortable while it lasts—often punishing undue expenditure of energy with severe headaches. This wind is popularly supposed to blow for three days at a time, though no such regular rule is actually obeyed. Malaria, and the manifold diseases that result from neglect or ignorance of sanitary laws, are the chief enemies of human life in Palestine[1].

At a very remote date man must have made his appearance in the land of Palestine. Rudely chipped implements, of the Palaeolithic stage of culture, are found in great numbers on the maritime plain, on the summit of the Judaean mountains, on the uplands of Moab, and in the caves of Phoenicia. Here and there the writer has noticed chipped flints lying on the ground while riding along the valleys of Samaria.

In the beginning of human life in the country, man lived entirely on the products of the chase. He was unacquainted with the arts of agriculture or the domestication of animals, nor had he knowledge of pottery-making, spinning or weaving. Clad, if at all, in skins, he sheltered from the weather in booths of

[1] For statistics about population, climate, diseases, and other details of the kind, on which within our limits it is impossible to enlarge, reference should be made to the works cited in the classified bibliography at the end of this book.

hide or of branches, or else in caves, of which the limestone hills in Palestine present an ample choice.

Flint implements of the most primitive types, the Chellean, and its later subdivision the Acheulean[1], are common in Palestine wherever the remains of Palaeolithic man have been found. Specimens of the characteristic axe-head have been picked up on the maritime plain, in yet greater numbers on the plateau south of Jerusalem, and in considerable quantities in the region to the south of 'Amman, east of Jordan. Some have also been discovered far to the south, in the neighbourhood of Petra. It is significant that none are yet reported from the lower reaches of the Jordan valley—the explanation no doubt being that in the Chellean period this was still occupied by the Dead Sea, then much more extensive than in its present shrunken dimensions. A magnificent collection of flint implements has been accumulated by the Assumptionist Fathers of Notre-Dame de France, at Jerusalem, and is stored in their excellent museum: the publication of an illustrated catalogue of these on the scale which the collection merits, would be a benefit not only to Palestinian but also to Prehistoric science.

[1] For an account of these periods of the Early Stone Age the reader must be referred to special treatises, of which the most recent, as well as the fullest and most thorough, is Déchelette's *Manuel d'archéologie préhistorique, celtique, et gallo-romaine*, Vol. I. (Paris, Picard, 1908). See also Sollas, *Ancient Hunters* (Macmillan, 1911).

Palaeolithic man in Palestine missed, however, the higher developments attained by his brother in France. The former country has yielded nothing comparable with the splendid chipped flints of Solutré and its allied stations; nor has the least trace of the exuberant art of the Magdalenian caves of the Pyrenees and elsewhere as yet come to light in the Holy Land[1].

The Mousterian type of flint scraper, which combines the efficiency of the early types with an economy of material, was the highest point attained by the Palestinians of the Early Stone Age. To this period belongs the greater part of the cave settlements of Phoenicia, which have been explored with great scientific skill by Père Zumoffen of the University of Saint-Joseph, Beirut. In this period instruments of bone, such as needles, begin to appear in the deposits. They were used for sewing skins together, for (as we have said) the hunter of the Early Stone Age knew nothing of textile fabrics.

One of the Phoenician coast settlements belongs to the Magdalenian level of civilization[2]. This is the well-known cave of Antelias, in which were discovered fragments of a human skeleton—too small,

[1] The cave sculptures found at Gezer certainly belong to a later epoch.

[2] Perhaps this term would be better than "Period" as it avoids any hint of *absolute* limitation in time over the inhabited world.

unfortunately, to tell us much about its owner. He was a hunter, and in the *débris* on the floor of the cave were found many fragments of the bones of animals on which he had lived, as well as scrapers of flint and worked bones, all belonging to the Magdalenian level, though far inferior in craftmanship to the products of Magdalenian France.

The latest writer on the stone age in Palestine, Dr Max Blanckenhorn, has assigned the date 10,000 B.C. to the end of the Palaeolithic age and the beginning of the Neolithic. In estimating the probability or otherwise of this calculation, it must not be forgotten that time has to be allowed, between the Palaeolithic period and the late Neolithic as represented by the Gezer cave dwellers, for an earlier Neolithic period, represented by some settlements in Phoenicia, notably the cave of Harajel. Here sherds of pottery were found—proving that we have reached the Neolithic stage of culture—side by side with the bones of extinct fauna, especially the woolly rhinoceros. This early Neolithic period is as yet but little known—only a very few stations belonging to it have been found: but the fact of its existence must not be forgotten when endeavouring to calculate at what time Palestine was first inhabited. The Gezer cave-dwellers may roughly be assigned to 3000 B.C., so that the dating of Dr Blanckenhorn is not unreasonable, remembering that the first steps in civilization are

always the most difficult, and take a much longer time than the later phases. Of the beginning of the Palaeolithic period, or the length of its duration, we know absolutely nothing.

Fascinating though they be, we must not linger over these dim beginnings. With further exploration we may in time gain fuller knowledge about the first men who walked the sacred soil of Palestine. But we cannot hope that the corrosion of twelve thousand years will have left us more than a shadow of their memory.

CHAPTER II

THE LATER STONE AGE IN PALESTINE

In the course of the exploration of Gezer, under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, it was found that the rocky heart of the hill was full of caves, partly natural, partly artificial. These caves varied greatly in both size and plan. Some were mere cells or shelters, about eight to ten feet square; others were tortuous collections of chambers, united by doorways and passages. A flight of steps cut in the rock usually gave access to the floor; through the roof opening at the head of these steps came the only light that illuminated the cave. As a rule

the roofs were low—a height of more than about seven feet being exceptional. In sifting the rubbish, with which the cave floors had become encumbered, it became evident that these holes in the rock had been the dwellings of a race of people of simple needs and of low culture. Rude pottery, made without the use of a potter's wheel, and ornamented with coarse moulding or roughly painted red lines; flint flakes, knives, and scrapers; millstones; rounded stone pebbles, that could be used for a variety of purposes—hearth stones, heating stones, missiles, polishers, etc.; perhaps an amulet or two of bone or of slate, perforated for suspension—these formed the furniture of the dwellings. Not a scrap of metal was found, save a few small fragments that had evidently washed in with the winter rains from the ruins of the later city, outside and above the cave mouths. No trace of evidence came to light, speaking of trade or converse with the great contemporary civilizations of the Euphrates or Nile valley.

In one cave some rude drawings scratched on the wall, representing cows and other animals, shewed a striving after art-expression such as manifests itself even in the lowest races. These were of infantile rudeness, and even the most successful could not for a moment compare with the extraordinary carvings and paintings of animal figures that the men of the



Fig. 1. Graffiti in a cave found at Gezer.

Those here illustrated represent animals (the two uppermost standing in long vegetation) and a human footprint.

reindeer age who inhabited the caves of France and Spain have bequeathed us.

These pictures tell us nothing of the life of the people who drew them, which we are obliged to infer as best we can from their caves and from the utensils they left behind them. These set before us an uncultured people, as yet unacquainted with metal, living by the chase and by their flocks, and by such simple agricultural processes as they had contrived. The poor character of their pottery, which is the chief relic of their handiwork, shews that they had not attained to so high a level of culture as had the Neolithic lake-dwellers of Europe. Spindle-whorls shewed that the art of spinning had been acquired by them, but as the soil and climate of Palestine have no preservative virtues—quite the reverse—their textile fabrics have of course totally disappeared.

One of the caves had evidently been used by this people as a place for the disposal of the dead. The body, placed at the sill of a chimney-aperture that provided a draught, was burnt: the remains becoming ultimately scattered and trampled over the whole surface of the floor. From one point of view this is unfortunate: the bones were too much destroyed by the action of the fire to make any very extensive examination of their ethnological character possible. All we can say is that we have to deal with a non-Semitic race, of *low* stature, with thick skulls, and

shewing evidence of the great muscular strength that is essential to savage life.

Of their religion it is not possible to say much. A space of rock in the middle of the city, covered with cup-hollows and associated with curious caves, into one of which was a drain as though for sacrificial blood, may conceivably have been a place of sacrifice—it is difficult to think of any other explanation that will fit all the details so readily. But of the nature of the rites that were observed at this place we have no information whatever. Some pig-bones found in the cave, at the bottom of the drain, may indicate that the pig was a pre-Semitic sacrificial animal, and may thus explain the horror of this creature which has become traditional among the Semites. But nothing more can be said of their religious customs and beliefs—save that the presence of pottery (no doubt originally containing food-offerings) in the cremation cave shewed that they shared the universal human belief in a life after death.

No other centres of population assignable to the late Neolithic period have as yet been found in Palestine, but there is every hope that with the steady growth of interest in the exploration of the mounds that dot its surface, further light will be thrown upon it by future discoveries. Some other relics of their handiwork however exist, in the megalithic remains that are to be seen here and

there on both sides of the Jordan. Dolmens still abound in various parts of Eastern Palestine, and though few now remain west of the Jordan it is probable that there were formerly as many in the one division of the country as the other.

Some of the most remarkable Dolmen areas are those in the Jaulan and the Hauran, and are described by Schumacher[1], with illustrations of characteristic specimens. There are sometimes areas containing great numbers of these monuments—veritable prehistoric cemeteries. No scientific explorations of the contents have been made—that duty has been left to ignorant treasure-hunting Arabs—and we therefore know nothing of the details of the burials within them: but the coexistence at probably the same culture-level of the Gezer cremation cave, and the Moabite and Galilean dolmens, indicates that as in France the two chief methods of disposal of the bodies of the dead were used concurrently.

West of the Jordan, dolmens are confined to a few specimens in the district of Galilee, one near Abu Dis in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem, and two, one of them ruined, near Beit Jibrin, between Hebron and Gaza—the centre of that wonderful subterranean cave-city, which is one of the most baffling subjects that the Palestinian archaeologist can investigate.

[1] See *Across the Jordan*, p. 62 and *The Jaulan*, p. 123.

Many of the Moabite dolmens are surrounded by one or more rings of boulders. This is indeed a characteristic feature of the megalithic sepulchres of that region. Otherwise the circles of stones, so characteristic of various parts of Western Europe, do not occur. An example alleged to exist at Beitin (supposed to be the ancient Bethel) is probably a mere fortuitous arrangement, and not intentional. Single *menhirs* or standing stones do occur sporadically however: but whether these are to be considered as remains of the early period to which this chapter is devoted is doubtful, in view of the great importance of the standing stone in Semitic cultus. Cairns are found here and there, but offer no evidence of their date or purpose. There is a striking series on the hills south of Jerusalem which look like tumuli, but which have not been properly examined.

But probably the most remarkable prehistoric built monuments in the country are the series of five close to Hizmeh, a village a short distance north of Jerusalem, and locally known as the *Kabur Beni Isra'in*, 'the Graves of the Children of Israel.' These strange monuments consist of long broad walls, in one of which a chamber and a shaft have been made, happily compared by Père Vincent to an Egyptian *mastaba*[1]. A suggestion regarding these monuments was made some years ago by Clermont-Ganneau—

[1] Vincent, *Canaan*, p. 257.



Fig. 2. One of the Kabûr Beni Isra'în.

The structure is roughly about 100 ft. long and 15 ft. broad. The background offers a good typical example of the rugged valley scenery in the Judaean mountains.

namely, that they are the basis of the tradition of Rachel's Tomb. This idea is simply thrown out by the way in Prof. Clermont-Ganneau's book[1], and so far as I know he has not yet returned to it, or given any attempt at demonstration. When the matter is looked into, it will be seen that though there are difficulties not easily got rid of, the theory is very probable.

How far the Biblical narrative preserves any traditions of the early pre-Semitic races is a very obscure question. We find many Palestinian tribes referred to, but there is really very little to shew whether the people named were Semitic or pre-Semitic, except such evidence as their place in history may afford. There are the Hivites, Perizzites, Jebusites, and the rest, so frequently enumerated in the story of the Exodus and the wanderings in the Wilderness: these, no doubt, were Semitic tribes, in race and language closely allied to the Hebrews themselves. The Amalekites, Midianites, and the rest of the trans-Jordanic tribes were certainly likewise Semitic, as much as their modern representatives, the Bedawin. It is, however, when we dig through this comparatively easy stratum that our difficulties begin. Underlying it we find people called Emim, Zamzummim, Zuzim, Rephaim, and Horites; we also find indications of a belief in

[1] *Archaeological Researches in Palestine*, Vol. II. p. 278.

people called Nephilim. What are we to make of these various ethnics?

The simplest and most probable answer to this question is that we have in them traditions of actual races, handed across the intervening Canaanitish occupation, but mingled with current folklore to an extent that the references to them in Hebrew literature are scarcely sufficient to enable us to gauge. This is most clearly brought out in the case of the Nephilim. According to the record in Numbers xiii. 33, the spies when confronted with the tall people who lived round Hebron, identified them with the Nephilim, a race who according to a fragmentary legend preserved in Genesis (vi. 1-4) had a half human half supernatural ancestry. Every people has traditions of predecessors in the occupation of its country, which either as giants or dwarfs figure in popular lore.

There seems to be reason for supposing that in certain parts of Palestine the invading Hebrews found a *tall* race before them. It is not necessary to postulate a *giant* race; there never has been such, anywhere. If the average stature of the aborigines were six inches or so greater than the average stature of the invaders, which is quite possible, that would be sufficient to give birth to theories of a gigantic race. The case of the Patagonians, so long believed to be giants, affords an exact parallel. The average stature of this fine

people is about six feet; but the first travellers, unprovided with such modern apparatus as pencils, notebooks and measuring tapes, and trusting overmuch to their memory—impressed also by single individuals who happened to exceed the average—brought back a report of them not unlike the report of the 'Nephilim' which the spies brought back to the anxious children of Israel.

This tall race, called more properly the Rephaim or Anakim (whatever these names may mean[1]) seems to have been established in the neighbourhood of Hebron. A non-Semitic stock was apparently observed among the inhabitants of this district, and vaguely termed 'the Hittites' by the author of Gen. xxiii. 3—a name that is probably used simply as a label for people recognised as being of alien race; much as the names 'Fenish' (= Philistines) or 'Rum' (= Greeks) are used by the fellahin of modern Palestine to denote ancient races to whom old buildings and other relics are popularly ascribed. According to the official history of the Hebrew immigration these 'giants' were driven out from Hebron by Joshua (ch. xi. 21) and only a remnant was left in Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod[2].

[1] Rephaim has the additional meaning 'ghosts' in Hebrew, an accident which probably had some influence in investing the sons of Anak with an uncanny reputation.

[2] Indicating that these places also were within their territory: it

Thus it appears that over Southern Palestine, from Hebron to Ashdod, there originally spread a tall non-Semitic race, who throughout the early Semitic occupation maintained their footing, and whose power was broken only by the Hebrew invaders. It is difficult to avoid connecting this people with the *origin* of the wonderful caves that are especially characteristic of just this part of the country. I especially emphasise the word *origin*, because there is clear evidence, in archways built of later masonry, in Christian and Muslim graffiti, and in other details, that the caves were used and modified in subsequent periods.

These caves consist of labyrinthine groups of square, rectangular, or circular chambers, hewn out of the soft limestone of the district with great care and exactness; they include water-stores, oil-presses, and other conveniences of life; and in fact are fully provided to be the residences, temporary or permanent, of families and groups of people. They vary greatly in size and complexity: one cave was found by the writer that contained no less than sixty chambers. This was quite exceptional: but caves with five, ten, or even twenty chambers, large and small, are not uncommon. The passages sometimes are so narrow as to make their exploration difficult; and the

is not said that they were driven from Hebron to settle in the cities named.

chambers are sometimes so large that it requires a bright light such as that of magnesium wire to illuminate them sufficiently for examination. One chamber, now fallen in, was found to have been 400 feet long and 80 feet high.

To have excavated these gigantic catacombs required the steady work of a long-settled population: it is unthinkable that they should have been made by fugitives, whether Christians avoiding persecution or Hebrews avoiding the Midianites—for it is highly probable that these are the 'dens in the mountains' referred to in Judges vi. 2, and said to have been made for such a purpose. Nor is it likely that these huge caves would have been cut out at all in *historic* times (*i.e.* after the settlement of the Hebrews) without some record or tradition attaching to them. At least, we can scarcely suppose that such immense engineering works would be undertaken unless required by a combination of historical circumstances to which some clue would be on record. We are driven back to conclude that the caves are the work of the race that, as we infer, inhabited just this district of Palestine, to whose fine physique the traditions about them bear testimony.

In the exact middle of the area bounded on one side by Hebron, and on the other by Gaza, Gath, and Ashdod, stands the village of Beit Jibrin, the 'House of Gabriel.' This is the great centre of the cave

district. Close by stood in Hebrew times the town of Mareshah, apparently meaning 'the place at the head.' Later this name became Hellenised into *Marissa*, and it survives as Mer'ash, the name of a ruined village of the Roman period. The town was destroyed in B.C. 40; but sometime before A.D. 68 it was refounded as *Baitogabra*, which is the origin of the modern corruption. Now *Baitogabra* does not mean 'House of Gabriel.' It is very probable that this is really an ancient name that has risen to the surface from the depths of the popular memory, and that it represents an ancient *Bêth ha-gibbôrîm*, 'House of the Mighty Men'—a memory of the Rephaite race that once inhabited the district of which it is the centre.

North of the Rephaim were apparently the puny and much less civilized Gezerite cave-dwellers. East of the Jordan were similar tribes—the Emim or 'dreadful ones,' the Zamzummim or Zuzim[1], apparently 'murmurers' or 'stammerers,' *i.e.* 'speakers of a barbarous tongue'—and east of the Jordan are found caves similar to those of Beit Jibrin (notably at ed-Der'a); but nowhere do they occur in such numbers or magnitude.

It should be noted that though the Gezerite cave-

[1] It is generally believed that one of these names is erroneous, being a scribal error or misreading for the other, and that one tribe is denoted by both.

dwellers were still in the stone age, the hewers of the Beit Jibrin caves possessed the use of metal tools, as the pick-marks testify. The cave-dwellers, therefore, fall into the overlap of stone and bronze. Perhaps the small race at Gezer were an earlier stock that would ultimately have been driven out altogether by the Rephaim if the Semitic invasion had not checked the progress of the latter. But here we trespass on the perilous quag of conjecture.

CHAPTER III

THE PRE-ISRAELITE SEMITIC OCCUPATIONS

In the heart of the ancient world, bridging together Asia and Africa, yet cut off almost completely from both by tongues of sea and by desert wastes, lies the vast, inscrutable land of Arabia. Closed to explorers by its own difficulties, by the wildness of its tribes, and by the fanatical exclusiveness that still centres round the ancient cult of the Black Stone, it still remains, probably, the least known region on the surface of the globe, in spite of intrepid attempts during the past century to open up its secrets.

Inscrutable as itself are the people whose home it is. Whence the Semites originally came is a question whose answer lies hidden in the mists of ages. But it

is on the assumption of an Arabian centre of distribution that the various phenomena of the peopling of the nearer East can most easily be explained. For though Arabia may breed vast numbers of its nomad tribes it cannot support them: and though the struggle for existence may be diminished artificially by the inhabitants, by means of intertribal battles and, in ancient times, of infanticide, yet a time comes periodically when necessity forces its surplus population to overrun the more fertile neighbouring lands. The country, as it has been noticed, comes into prominence historically every thousand years, more or less. Within the first decade of the twentieth century, the Turkish government had the gravest difficulty in quelling insurrections of the Bedawin in the province of Yaman: most likely this was ultimately due to the cause which produced the great semi-military, semi-religious movement in the seventh century, of which Muhammad was the central figure —the Nabataean outbreaks, in the fourth and fifth centuries B.C.—the tribal movements of which the Exodus was an episode, about 1200 B.C.—the earliest Semitic outbursts on Palestine, which must have been from 2000 to 2500 B.C.—and the yet earlier invasions by which the first Semitic colonists established themselves in the rich plains of Mesopotamia.

Portraits of Assyrian kings, and of Semitic captives in Egypt, preserve for us the likeness of members of

the various tribes and sub-tribes which may be said to have come into being by these successive migrations. They illustrate the closeness of the Semitic unity: the type of features, familiar to all if only from modern caricatures of contemporary Jews, persists throughout, and is sufficient to tell us that, various though the fortunes of Babylonians and Bedawin, Hebrews and Phoenicians, Assyrians and Amorites, may have been, yet they were all one people, united, whether they would admit it or not, by the closest bonds of blood-brotherhood. The evidence of language supports the evidence of physiognomy. As compared with the wide morphological differences between Aryan tongues, the Semitic languages seem but dialects of a common speech, so nearly do they resemble one another both in grammatical structure and in vocabulary.

The earliest of the Semitic colonizations that we can trace are the Babylonian, in the regions of the Euphrates. When this powerful people and the Assyrians were once established there, they blocked further progress eastward: future outbursts were diverted toward the west, and compelled to seek a home in the lands bordering on the Mediterranean.

The report of the spies, which we have already had occasion to allude to in connexion with the giant race, graphically illustrates the appeal which the richness of the land of Palestine made to eyes

atrophied by the barren desert. The fatuous (not to say profane) popular notion that the land is blighted by a Divine curse, is an index of a deplorable want of imagination. The promise of 'a land flowing with milk and honey' was not made to a crowd of beef-fed excursionists, coming from cultivated and developed lands of the modern West, but to tribes of half-starved wanderers, fighting their way from oasis to oasis over sterile sands.

This first Semitic immigration never found its historian. Its leaders and their deeds are forgotten. Probably it was not essentially different in character from the immigrations that followed it. Though so close in kin, there is strangely little cohesion in the Semitic body; tribes fall apart from one another on small occasions and often become hostile to one another. So the Habiru and the Sutu came in the fifteenth century: so, later, came Judah and Ephraim: so, in the Arab immigration, came Yaman and Kais. And as all these fell apart from time to time, or actually went to war with one another, we may assume that probably the first Semitic immigration was a congeries of closely related but loosely united tribes. In one respect the invasion differed from any that came after it, namely in the non-Semitic character of the defeated races. The Semites, armed as they were at least to some extent with bronze weapons, had the advantage over them, and at any rate partially

succeeded in wresting the land from them. They left the formidable Rephaim alone, as the Hebrews found this people still in possession when they arrived. The more insignificant people whose remains were found at Gezer were apparently annihilated. Indeed it is at Gezer that the chief indications of the First Semitic Invasion were discovered.

In two important respects the First Semitic invaders were superior, as regards their civilization, to the people they dispossessed—namely, in the use of bronze, as just mentioned, and in the use of a simple form of potter's wheel. Otherwise they cannot be said to have been much in advance of their predecessors. At first they lived in the caves that these had been obliged to vacate, but before long they began to build houses, of the type that has persisted, with wonderfully little change, down to the villages of modern twentieth century Palestine. It consists of an open courtyard, where most of the domestic work is done during the day, and of a number of small rooms that serve as stables, store-rooms and sleeping chambers. These invaders no doubt brought with them their particular variety of the Semitic cults which, again, are in their natural shape of sufficiently uniform character to demonstrate the close connexion between the members of the Semitic race. Probably they began to rear pillars, one of the chief tangible expressions of Semitic worship. They never imitated

their predecessors by burning the dead—this practice is repugnant to all Semites—but they flung them carelessly into a cave, where they were left as they fell.

Some time about 2000 to 1800 B.C.—in the absence of records it is impossible to fix the date more definitely—we find a rather sudden advance in civilization to have taken place. This, like all the other forward steps of which recent excavation in the country has revealed the traces, was due to foreign interference. The Semitic natives, Amorite, Hebrew, or Arab, never invented anything: they assimilated all the elements of their civilization from without. This principle is the key to the interpretation of all remains of antiquity found in the land of Palestine. If we pass through the successive strata of an ancient town, as laid bare by the explorer's spade, we can perceive a foreign stimulus powerfully affecting the whole culture at some particular stage of history. Then in succeeding generations we can trace the influence gradually deteriorating, till, just when it is about to disappear altogether, it is swamped by fresh influences from somewhere else. Egypt first; then those great civilizations of Crete and the Aegean, that have slumbered forgotten till waked to life again in our own days, but whose influence lasts through practically the whole history of Palestine as covered by the Old Testament. Then, in quick succession,

follow the Classical Greek culture, Rome, and Byzantium: then Muhammadanism in the vigour of its fresh youth: then the extraordinary attempt to graft West European feudalism on the country, which we call the Crusades. After the fall of the Latin kingdom the culture of the country collapses into an almost recordless semi-barbarism, till new ideas, new machinery, and, above all, new colonists from Europe have within the last century quickened it once more to life.

From first to last there was not a native potter in Palestine who could so much as invent a new design to paint on his waterpots. There was not an armourer who could invent a new pattern of sword or arrowhead. The modern peasants live in houses practically identical in style and construction with those which sheltered the peasants of 2000 B.C.—a community of white ants could not be more unprogressive. It is the last country in the world, perhaps, where we would naturally have expected the development of an original conception of divinity so totally at variance with the 'gods of the nations' as that which we find in the writings of the Hebrew prophets.

Towards the beginning of the third millennium B.C. we have very definite claims made by Lugalzaggizi, king of Lagash, to domination over all the lands from the Persian gulf to what is supposed to be the

Mediterranean Sea. But as yet no trace of this very ancient domination has been found in the country itself: some lucky explorer of the future may find relics that will speak of it. Meanwhile, the oldest foreign civilization of whose influences definite relics have come to light within the land of Palestine, is that of Egypt under the twelfth dynasty.

The absence of any Egyptian inscriptions recording conquest in the country, makes it probable that this influence was commercial rather than military. The history of the relations of Egypt and Palestine during this period is very little known. The large number of scarabs, amulets, and personal adornments bearing hieroglyphic inscriptions or decorations referable to that period, which have been found (especially at Gezer) is evidence of the importance of the influence exercised at the time by Egyptian culture.

Perhaps the best way of forming an idea of Palestinian culture, when the influence of twelfth dynasty Egypt was playing upon it, would be to enter in thought into a city of the period, and try to conjure up a vision of what we should see. The recently excavated city of Gezer may be chosen as the basis of our imaginings, but the description would in general fit any other city of its time.

Rather, let us first take our stand on the hill-top to the south, now crowned by a modern Muslim shrine which, perhaps, represents an ancient holy place: and

let us look at the scene below. The long narrow hill once crowned by the ancient city is now deserted, save for a house built by European land-owners some forty years ago. Between the ancient site and our standpoint is the flat stretch of bare rock that is used as the threshing-floor of the village. To the left of the threshing-floor is the modern village, the evil odour of which taints the air for a considerable radius outside its own borders. The village streets are narrow, crooked, and unclean. The houses are built of rough stones, set in mud, and are plastered with the same material: here and there attempts at decoration, with crude painted geometrical patterns, are to be noticed. The roofs are flat: the rooms are two or three in number, devoid of all but the most essential furniture. Human beings and animals herd together at night, the former being at most separated from the latter by being on a raised platform. Offensive insects infest every corner. A few melancholy-looking dogs prowl about seeking what they may devour.

The people live just the life that might be expected under such unhealthy conditions. The young children are peculiarly evil-looking morsels of humanity, and are not bettered by their distended paunches, the result of unrestrained water-drinking. As they grow older their appearance improves, and some of the young men of about 20 are decidedly



Fig. 3. A CORNER OF A PALESTINIAN VILLAGE.

The houses on the left are typical, and illustrate the description in the text. On the right are piles of straw, stored for fodder, fuel, etc., and plastered with mud and manure to protect them from the weather.

fine looking, though there are many others who are less attractive. Some of the women are not uncomely at about the age of 15 or 16, but they rapidly deteriorate after this time, and age very early. Old women are much rarer than old men: but in both sexes it is still true that threescore and ten is the highest possible limit of age to which an average person can hope to attain.

Now as we stand by the Muslim shrine, let us draw back the curtain of the past, and imagine ourselves in the time of the last kings of the twelfth dynasty.

The little modern village to the left is swept out of existence at once. The silent ridge before us, on the other hand, becomes alive with a large city, about half a mile in length, surrounded by a colossal wall which is broken at intervals by shallow projecting towers. This wall probably stands 20 or 30 feet above the ground and is about 14 feet thick. The top is protected by a breast-high parapet, from over which missiles can be cast down by the defenders on a besieging army. But the time of storm and stress for Gezer, so far as it is recorded for us in written history, is not yet.

In the wall facing us, a little west of the middle, is a gate of the city—a narrow entrance flanked by two massive towers of brick. How this entrance was closed there is not sufficient evidence to shew:

it is possible that two portcullis-like diaphragms of wood were dropped into the spaces between six great slabs of stone, three on each side, and these wedged up with baulks of timber. But this is mere conjecture.

Passing through the gate, which is paved with cobble-stones polished smooth by footwear, we find ourselves in a scene that almost reproduces the sight of the modern village with which we filled our eyes before plunging into the past. We see narrow, crooked, unclean streets. Our nostrils are assailed by the stench of an airless, drainless oriental town. We see stone houses set in mud, plastered in mud, with one story, flat roofs, and courtyards inside, with raised platforms for sleeping—in fact we see just such houses as we saw in the modern village. We see the same unhealthy people, the same insects, the same dogs. In essential particulars the life to-day is the same as the life of three and a half millennia back. Here is a knot of children, all of them wearing conspicuously some kind of amulet to avert the still-dreaded evil eye, and probably very little else. There at some shop-keeper's stall a quarrel is raging over a false weight, such as we might hear any day in the village ; and, allowing for dialectic differences, many of the violent expressions of abuse that we may overhear are identical with those that are still indulged in during these short

and stormy scenes. If we return a half hour later we shall very likely find that the combatants have by some mysterious influence become reconciled, and are playing some game like draughts together.

But we are still at the gate of the city. Let us penetrate a little further in, and let us as we do so look out for those points of contrast which record the development of civilization.

Of course the first and most obvious difference between the past and the present is the difference of religion, and all that religion involves or implies. Our city is destined to be subject in turn to the influence of Philistines, bringing their exotic culture and cultus from oversea; of Hebrews, gradually sloughing off the nature-worship they have inherited from their Semitic ancestors, and developing their sublime monotheism; of Assyrian and of Greek paganism; of Maccabean puritanism; of Eastern Christianity, under the Byzantine Empire; of Muhammadanism; of Western Christianity, under the Crusades; and of Muhammadanism restored, which has now exercised its influence for seven unbroken centuries. A greater contrast could not well be imagined between the official religions in the ancient Canaanite city and in the modern Arab village.

Though deity was localised, according to early Semitic theory, so that an exile was obliged to

'serve other gods' when driven to another country, we should unquestionably find a synthesis of religions in this ancient city. The Egyptian residents especially seem to have brought their gods with them: and (as moulds for producing impressions testified) figures of Egyptian divinities were modelled locally. There was probably a temple to some Egyptian divinity in the city, which, however, was totally destroyed, only one stone with a hieroglyphic letter remaining to speak of a building inscribed all over like the temples of the Nile valley. This, however, was at a later date than that with which we are at present concerned. The native Semites continued their cult of the local *numen*, a being to be propitiated by sacrifices of the most terrible kind, and of the great Mother-goddess of whom crude representations came to light by scores in the course of the excavation.

These ancient deities are not yet wholly dead. They survive in the cult of the local shrines such as that by which we took our stand when beginning this our attempt to peer into the past. There is not a landscape in Palestine which is not dominated by one of the white-domed hill-top sanctuaries, now dedicated to the memory of some true-believing Muslim who acquired sanctity in one way or another, but notwithstanding still carrying on, under a thin disguise, the traditions of the primitive Semitic

hill-top shrines. The High Places have not even yet been taken away. And, as has been said so often that it is now a mere commonplace, the oath by the sheikh is far more binding locally than an oath by the Supreme Being. Within sight of Gezer is the shrine of the Sheikh Selman. Accuse a man of theft, and he will swear by Allah to his innocence in the most emphatic way. Conduct him to Sheikh Selman and ask him to place his hand on the tomb and then to take an oath of compurgation—it will not be difficult to discover the truth from his behaviour under such an ordeal.

If we turn to the left on passing through the gate we shall come to a work which it is impossible to imagine the modern natives executing. This is the tunnel of Gezer, whereby for some five hundred years the city was provided with a copious supply of water inside the walls. The advantage of this in siege-time of course needs no pointing out. But who it was that designed this grandiose excavation, by what means and for how long the work was carried on, and what was its original purpose, are questions that cannot now be answered.

A few words of description may be given of this great engineering work, as, to say the least, it must considerably increase our respect for the Canaanite civilization to contemplate it. It is a passage, 12 feet across and 23 feet high at the top—a little

less at the bottom—sloping downward at an angle of about 30 degrees, with a staircase of eighty steps, to a depth of over 90 feet vertically below the surface of the rock. The whole work was executed by means of tools of flint. At the bottom of the tunnel is a vast natural cave, with no outlet—a pocket in the heart of the rock. Here rises a powerful spring of water.

Thus, the ancient Canaanite population here executed a work which would no longer be possible to their degenerate descendants. These found the work of clearing out the mere loose stones and earth with which the tunnel had become filled a sufficient tax on their strength. In various parts of the country—notably at Bittir, near Jerusalem—there are small passages which have been cut in the rock in order to direct the water of a spring to a convenient spot. These are of Roman workmanship. Also no doubt Roman are the splendidly built wells, one in almost every village, from which the water supply of the community is still drawn. The modern fellahin have entered on the inheritance of these ancient works, but are quite incapable of matching them.

Let us make our way further through the city. Here we find a hole in the ground, stopped by a great stone. It is the entrance—one of several entrances—to a huge cave, once a residence of the cave-dwellers that were driven out some few hundreds

of years before; but now adapted as a cemetery by a wealthy family whose members are there buried, with their treasures.

Turning to the right and wandering eastwards through crooked lanes, we find ourselves at last just about the middle of the city, and standing in an open square. This is the High Place, the centre of the City's religious life. The High Place of Gezer has by now been so often described that it would be superfluous to expend space in an account of it here. And of the rites enacted there, it is impossible to better the account of one who, if not an eye-witness, was sufficiently near to them to have full knowledge of their nature: it will be found in Isaiah lvii. 5–6.

Let us resume our walk through the city, and pause to watch this potter at work. The new make of potter's wheel has recently been introduced: his predecessors in the trade had to form the vessel with one hand, rotating the wheel with the other. As the potter we see plies his trade, he can with the improved instrument sit and rotate it with his foot, leaving both hands free for modelling. The result is that his vessels are much better made than was the case two or three centuries ago: but this is also due to his having better models to follow. Before his eyes are fine vessels that merchants have brought from Egypt, and yet finer works of art that have been brought from an island of the sea which he

knows as Alashia, but which we call Cyprus—whither their art has come from the lands of great and mysterious sea-kings which he possibly knows of by vague hearsay. And he is spending his life in the little cell where we find him, modelling feeble copies of these ceramic masterpieces, and painting feeble copies of their coloured decoration on his handiwork.

Next door is another craftsman. He is a worker in flint—for though bronze has now been in use for a considerable time, the old material is still employed for rough work, and for purposes for which bronze is not hard enough or too expensive. Rock is quarried with flint: wheat is reaped with flint sickles: the skins of slaughtered animals are scraped clean with flint: this tradesman finds plenty of custom as he sits and splinters flakes off the nodules that are found in abundance in the chalky hills around. A century or two later his descendants engaged in the same trade will be startled to hear of an Egyptian who has come with two axe-heads made of a material that he calls something like *ba-en-pet*, the metal of heaven—for it falls from time to time from the blue vault of heaven, which must therefore be made of this material. It is harder than the hardest bronze, and for weapons and agricultural and carpenter's tools is of marvellous efficiency! But the Egyptian is fated to have the misfortune to lose his precious axe-heads in the water-tunnel, where they lay till

the excavators found them; and the menace to the flint trade will be postponed for another five hundred years. For it will not be till 1000 B.C. that iron is destined to come into general use, and not till then will flint be finally abandoned for such purposes as have been named above.

Here next is a carpenter and joiner, working with tools of bronze and bone, and like the potter, feebly imitating Egyptian models. Then comes a weaver, and then perhaps a goldsmith. A shrewd man of business is this goldsmith, with two drawers-full of little stone weights: the one lot too light, to sell with; the other lot too heavy, to buy with[1]. And he too is turning out from his moulds by the gross copies of ear-rings and amulets such as are worn in Egypt, and never thinks of trying to strike out on an original line of his own.

And so the busy life goes on in the town. Of course, like all orientals, ancient and modern, the people pass their time in the fear of the caprice of their deity and their despot, who lives in that large building we passed on the right in entering the city gate—a building which was as plain as the rest, and

[1] A weight which is a correct multiple of any standard is one of the rarest things that an excavator in the East can discover. Loss by wear or injury has always to be allowed for, but this will not account for all the deviations from accuracy; nor of course will it explain the weights that are *in excess* of their proper amount.

only distinguished from its companions by its superior size, so that it was not worth our while to stop to give it closer examination. In the courtyard of the building was sunk the shaft of the colossal tunnel.

But in spite of despot or deity the people seem fairly contented and prosperous. Perhaps it was the happiest time in the whole history of Gezer. The fertile lands of the city produced an abundant harvest. The olive-groves—far more extensive than the poor remnant of to-day—filled the rock-cut vats with oil. There were riches in the city and men and walls to defend them, and the people ate and drank, married and gave in marriage, and bought and sold, and lived secure, without thought of what a day would bring forth.

The security for a time seemed justified. They might occasionally feel a passing twinge of apprehension of a raid by Bedawin or by Egyptians. But the apprehensions would be allayed soon after the time of our walk through the city. For the Bedawin found the outlet they needed in Egypt itself. As a tidal wave sweeps all before it, so the Bedawin burst on Egypt and, sweeping away the glories of the middle empire, established the rule of the 'shepherd kings' that dominated the land for some two hundred years. While these savages had the wealth of Egypt to fatten upon, they had no need to turn aside to the less inviting pastures of Palestine:

while the blood of Egypt was being sucked it had no strength for foreign aggression. So the life of the Palestinian city went on happily enough, and the only change we can trace is, as might be expected, a steady increase in the amount of direct or indirect Cretan influence on its civilization, and a corresponding decrease in that of Egypt.

Let us suffer four hundred years to pass by and once more walk through the city.

There is a new and stronger wall now. The houses we saw in our first visit have all gone, and their places are taken by others of the same style. The potter, the weaver, the goldsmith, the carpenter still ply their trade as of old, and still turn out shoddy imitations of foreign goods as of old: a little different in style—on the whole inferior, both in design and execution—but essentially the same as before.

But I think we would notice a subtle change in the bearing and manner of the people. For the city has passed through a succession of vicissitudes. First the hero Ahmose had arisen and helped Egypt to shake off the yoke of foreign barbarians: then the still greater Thutmose III had expanded the empire by force of arms, and Palestine and Syria had fallen under his rule. What might have been had his

successors been men of his calibre, with hands strong to retain the empire he had won for them, it is futile to speculate. For this was not to be. Amen-Hotep III was a worthy successor of the great Thutmose: but he is dead, and on his throne sits a deformed aesthetic trifler, who spends his time developing his theories of religion and art. And the Bedawin, driven back on their deserts, must perforce find an outlet where they may, and are pressing down on Palestine.

One Yapakhi sits in the governor's seat in the city. We know nothing of him but what we can glean from the four short letters written by him to the heedless dilettante, his overlord to whom he was obliged to give lip-service: and no one can be expected to look his best when so engaged, particularly when he is begging for assistance that never comes, against enemies rapidly increasing in strength, and is moreover distracted by dissensions in his own household. His brother joined himself to the Bedawin, as did almost all the princes of Palestine one by one, despairing of support from the egregious Ikhnaton. One town after another falls before the invaders, and at last, headed (as it would appear) by one Beia, son of Gulati, Gezer itself is invested and falls into their hands. The inhabitants accepted the inevitable with an equanimity we can hardly blame under the circumstances. They threw themselves

whole-heartedly into the cause of the Bedawin, and helped them with provisions and men when they were engaged in their operations against the citadel of Jerusalem, which in the face of every discouragement long remained attached to the Egyptian king with a loyalty worthy of a better object.

These distractions cannot but have had a demoralising effect on the civilization of the country. We can trace its influence in the decline everywhere apparent in the standard of art, such as it was. The artificial unity produced by the Egyptian overlordship, if indeed a unity ever existed, falls to pieces, and the whole country becomes a mass of little clans, scarcely more than a collection of independent villages, with such highly developed mutual jealousy that union for a common purpose, even for the public safety, was out of the question. The Canaanite civilization was in fact falling into a hopeless decline, when the next great raids on Palestine took place.

CHAPTER IV

THE FIRST STRUGGLE OF WEST AND EAST

We began the last chapter with a glance at Arabia and the East-lands. Now we must turn our eyes for a moment to the West, where for long years events

had been preparing the way for the next scene of our drama.

From an immemorial antiquity the island of Crete, fortified by her navies that commanded the Eastern Mediterranean, and that rendered possible a mutually advantageous trade with Egypt, had been advancing forward by rapid steps along the road of culture, till it developed what was perhaps the highest and, in many respects, the most modern civilization that the ancient world ever saw. To follow the stages of the wonderful history of this island, as recent excavations have revealed it, is a fascinating task, but would be both impossible and out of place in the present pages. We may take the glories of the palace of Cnossos for granted, noting only that the triumphs of the Cretan artificers are the foundation for the efforts of the Palestinian craftsmen.

What is important for us to mention is, that much about the time when the Bedawin tribes were vexing the souls of the petty chieftains of the Amorites, as we described at the end of the previous chapter, the great Cretan civilization received its death-blow. The island was sacked, and its people dispersed to various parts of the Aegean and the south coasts of Asia Minor, carrying with them traditions of their ancient maritime prowess and of their achievements in the field of art, but too much broken up to attain again the heights that they had reached in the days of their prosperity.

The various branches of the dispersion of the Cretans, shortly after the sack of their native land, begin to make their appearance on the Egyptian monuments, which display them in a sinister light. Their piracies give trouble to the Egyptian fleets. They league themselves with the foes of Egypt, and are with difficulty beaten back. They seriously interfere with the comfort of the great Hittite empire, and overrun its outposts in N. Syria. Finally, in the reign of Ramessu III, they prepare a great expedition to descend on Egypt both by land and by sea. But Ramessu, the last great king of Egypt, was equal to the occasion. Having already thoroughly organized the military resources of Egypt, he beat the invaders back from his coasts. The 'Peoples of the Sea' met with a severe repulse at his hands, and were compelled to fall back on lands outside the dominion of the conquering Pharaoh.

The nearest and most convenient land was, of course, the coast-line of Palestine, and here the remnant of the invaders established themselves—at first towards the north, but gradually creeping southward as the strength of Egypt waned, under the feeble kings that succeeded Ramessu III.

On the Egyptian monuments the chief tribe among the 'Peoples of the Sea' is called *Purasati*, which name, there can be no doubt, is to be equated to the familiar *Philistines* of the Old Testament.



Fig. 4. A PHILISTINE CAPTIVE.
One of the wall-carvings in the temple of Ramessu III at Medinet Habu.

Thus the Westerns first came in contact with the land of Palestine. Though severely crippled by their losses in their fatal battle with the Egyptians, they would probably have been equal to wiping out the decaying Semitic communities, had not an access of new blood, with eager national aspirations, been already infused into the latter. Three important tribes, the Kenites, Judah, and Ephraim, with a number of subordinate septs, had crossed the Jordan and begun a systematic attempt to colonize the country.

This invasion was different from any that had gone before. Strange happenings and strange covenants had linked these tribes together in a strong religious brotherhood. Some, at any rate, of their number had come up from servitude in Egypt, and their adventures coloured in time the traditions of the whole community. Judah and the Kenites, with the subordinate Simeonites, turned towards the south and overran the whole district of Hebron. Ephraim and its satellite clans made their way towards the north, and occupied certain districts from the ancient sanctuary of Bethel northward. But on many important cities they made no impression: the fertile coast plain it was out of their power to conquer, and between the two branches of the invasion stood the unconquered citadel of Jerusalem, keeping them apart.

The newcomers were not made welcome by the nations round about. Moabites, Canaanites, Midianites, tribes of the same stock as themselves, in turn endeavoured to dispossess them and, according to the native traditions, succeeded in imposing upon them a certain degree of servitude. They had not yet attained to the conception of a central monarchy; but as occasion arose a popular leader was found in this tribe or that, who successfully championed his people against their oppressors.

It must have been when matters were in this state that the Philistine raid on Egypt, its repulse, and the subsequent settlement on the Palestinian coast took place. This introduced many complications into Palestinian politics: though its ultimate result was wholly beneficial to the Hebrew people. It gave the necessary pressure that unified them, so far as they could be unified into one nation: and it held up an ideal of civilization before their barbarous eyes which must have been a stimulus to their ambition, however they may have affected to despise their rivals.

The Philistines' settlement originally extended far beyond the region allowed them in the current Bible maps. In Egyptian records we find them established at Dor, south of Carmel. The story of the great battle of Gilboa, and the subsequent events, shew that they must have commanded the plains of Esdraelon, and consequently even so late as the end

of the reign of Saul, must have held the coast north of Carmel: the far inland town of Beth-Shan—which was situated close to the Jordan—was then evidently in their hands.

Thus it was that the West first met the East. It was a curious reversal of the usual circumstances of such antagonisms. We are inclined to picture the West as a thing of yesterday, new-fangled with its inventions and its progressive civilization, and the East as an embodiment of hoary and unchanging tradition. But when West first met East on the shores of the Holy Land, it was the former which represented the magnificent traditions of the past, and the latter which looked forward to the future. The Philistines were of the remnant of the dying glories of Crete: the Hebrews had no past to speak of, but were entering on the heritage they regarded as theirs, by right of a recently ratified divine covenant.

At first, however, the Philistines had their will of country and people. The Samson epic, which concentrates into the person of a single champion the events of a border guerilla warfare—the slaughtering of bands of the enemy with rude and extemporised weapons, the burning of crops, and so forth—postulates a background of passive subjection on the part of the Hebrews to their Western conquerors. The struggle in the following century was

long and severe. The sheikhs of the Hebrews could do little in formal warfare against their warlike enemies; they tried to make up for their military deficiencies by bringing the Ark into battle, with disastrous results. Without a ruler capable of organization, the scattered and divided tribes of Israel could never have rid themselves unaided of the Philistine yoke.

Such a leader was found at first in Samuel, whose official position in the sanctuary at Shiloh gave a religious sanction to his work. But as Samuel advanced in years he became more and more absorbed in his religious duties, and there was good reason to fear that the sons he would leave behind would not follow worthily in his steps. It became clear that a leader who should devote himself entirely to the duty of conducting the people to war was an absolute necessity if the Hebrews were to continue to exist. A young Benjamite, distinguished among other things by his physical excellence, was selected. The traditions vary as to whether Samuel resented or accepted without demur this encroachment on his judicial functions—he certainly strongly resented a subsequent trespass on his priestly privileges by the newly-appointed king. However, Samuel anointed him, and his reign, inaugurated by his brilliant delivery of Jabesh-Gilead, promised happily for the oppressed and suffering people. But the high hopes

were doomed to disappointment : symptoms of mental derangement made their appearance, probably early in his career, manifesting themselves in a tendency to melancholia and to an unhealthy religious excitement. The malady was unquestionably aggravated by the treatment the unhappy king suffered at the hands of Samuel—amounting virtually to what would now be called excommunication—and by the bitterness of seeing his own prowess and popularity waning before that of his young armour-bearer, whose extraordinary influence over his son and heir-apparent was no doubt a further perpetual irritation. And perhaps the deepest tragedy lies in this, that his mournful story has been recorded for all time by a writer who was entirely out of sympathy with him. So far from leading his people to victory, the poor insane king, when he and his house were swept out of existence at Gilboa, left the Philistines stronger than they had ever been before.

The complete reversal of the situation under David is a very remarkable historical phenomenon. At first the successor of Saul reigned over the southern division of the Hebrew kingdom, probably by grace of the Philistines of whom he had, during his exile, become a vassal. But when he captured the Jebusite stronghold of Jerusalem, and united the northern kingdom with the southern, the Philistines came up against a rival who was thus making himself too

powerful. Three combats with the Philistines are recorded, after which the Philistines seem to have collapsed suddenly and for ever. Even the revolt of Absalom did not encourage them to take the opportunity of attempting to regain their lost ground. From this point onwards, the Philistines gradually became absorbed in their Semitic surroundings. Down to the time of Nehemiah their language lingered in the town of Ashdod (Neh. xiii. 24); but probably this was the last relic of their nationality that was preserved.

Such was, in outline, the course of the struggle when first West met East in Palestine. Remembering that we are writing a history not of events but of civilization in the country, it is time to enquire in what state was culture while this conflict was going on.

There were three elements which we have to take into account at the beginning of the struggle. There was the now decaying civilization of the sedentary Canaanites, in their cities 'with walls reaching up to heaven' as the alarmed spies reported. It can hardly be claimed that anything was contributed by the immigrant nomads who overran the country: an abrupt deterioration of all the arts is the only result that could be expected from this barbarian influx. On the other hand, the cultured Philistines to some extent restored the balance, and from this point of view it was a most fortunate circumstance that they

so completely dominated the country at the early formative period of the history of the Hebrew nation. Had it not been for this fact, the clock might have been put a long way back, and the land sunk into a barbarism from which it would have taken many centuries to emerge.

The only contributions the Hebrews made to the culture of the country were their simple desert customs and their religious organization. On the other hand, the Philistines, sprung from one of the great homes of art of the ancient world, had brought with them the artistic instincts of their race: decayed no doubt, but still superior to anything they met with in the land itself. Tombs to be ascribed to them, found in Gezer, contained beautiful jewellery and ornaments. The Philistines, in fact, were the only cultured or artistic race who ever occupied the soil of Palestine, at least until the time when the influence of classical Greece asserted itself too strongly to be withstood. Whatsoever things raised life in the country above the dull animal existence of fellahin were due to this people. Palestine was in very truth the land of the Philistines, as its name declares unto this day; and the peasantry of the modern villages—who know no more than their cattle of the history of the land they live in—still tell of the great days of old when it was inhabited by the mighty race of the 'Fenish.'

The history recorded in the Book of Judges gives us a picture of almost complete savagery, without laws, without organization, when every man did what was right in his own eyes. In fact, it was the life of the free desert communities. In the First Book of Samuel we see a distinct step forward; there is a king, and armies are brought into some kind of order; but still the culture is very low and crude. Yet two great strides forward were made at that time or in the years immediately following it. These were the introduction of iron, and the invention of alphabetic writing. The first of these is certainly, the latter probably, to be laid to the credit of the Philistines.

The history of the origin of the use of iron is in some respects problematical. Everything points to about 1000 B.C. as the extreme limit to which we can assign the use of iron objects found in Europe. The same is true of discoveries made in Asia Minor, the Levant coast, and the adjacent islands. But in a few individual cases in Egypt the use of this metal was somehow anticipated at a very early date—almost as early, indeed, as bronze—but never to such an extent as to become general. Whether certain persons discovered for themselves the art of smelting and working iron (which is really not more difficult than the corresponding operation applied to copper, and indeed is less recondite than the process of making

bronze by alloying two different metals) and died without publishing their secret; or whether, as is more likely, the iron-bearing ores were not discovered in sufficient quantity to make their working profitable till the late date above given, cannot be certainly asserted.

A passage in the Book of Samuel[1], obscure and corrupt—in part indeed unintelligible—points clearly enough, notwithstanding, to the conclusion that it was the Philistines who introduced the use of iron to the country which they occupied. No smith was in Israel—the Philistines carefully retained the monopoly of working in the new metal—and except the king and the king's son no one was able to procure an iron sword: all had to make shift with ox-goads or other agricultural implements. The passage asserts almost in as many words that the Hebrews were still in the Bronze, the Philistines already in the Iron Age. The break-up of the Philistine domination of course removed the embargo on the new metal, and when David was on the throne its use became general. With the spread of iron, flint—which, as we have already said, was still used as a material for rough cutting implements—rapidly disappeared. The excavations reveal facts pointing to the same conclusions.

It is interesting to note that the use of iron was at

[1] 1 Sam. xiii. 19–22.

first avoided in connexion with religious undertakings. The passage 1 Kings vi. 7 does not imply (as is commonly supposed) that the temple rose *in silence*: it means that its stones were not profaned by the touch of this new metal. (Compare Exod. xx. 25.)

Even greater obscurity shrouds the origin of the alphabet in which were written such ancient fragments of Hebrew, Phoenician, and allied languages as have survived. This wonderful achievement is commonly ascribed to the Phoenicians, but without any grounds beyond ancient Greek tradition. That the Phoenicians, true to their function as merchants and middlemen, imparted a knowledge of alphabetical writing to the Greeks need not be questioned: but as knowledge grows it becomes increasingly difficult to believe that they were capable of the enormous analytic feat of devising an alphabet whereby the simple sounds of their language were written down. The far more cultured Babylonians and Assyrians, notwithstanding their extensive and varied literary activity, never even began to evolve an alphabet from their complex syllabaries. The Egyptians maintained all the cumbrous machinery of syllabic signs, determinatives and the rest until an alphabet of Greek origin was introduced and swamped them. How then could it be reserved for the Phoenicians to attain to what these great nations never could reach?

The question is still open: but when the future

brings its solution it will probably be found that the Philistines had a large share in developing this great gift to mankind. They came from a country where a form of script had been practised from an early time, originally hieroglyphic, but, with the sound practicality of the Cretans, early modified into a linear character. There is considerable resemblance between certain of these linear signs and the letters of the so-called Phoenician alphabet, though this must not blind us to the fact that there are also many differences, and that so far attempts to correlate the two systems of writing have not been very successful. But not much can be expected one way or another till the happy day comes when the Cretan tablets have been deciphered.

It is true, no trace of pre-Exilic writing, in any native language other than Semitic, has yet been found in the mounds of the maritime lands of Palestine. This is not to be wondered at—the majority of documents would no doubt be written on perishable materials; and exploration has so far not exhausted the possibilities of any of the mounds, even of those where excavations have been made. Till some such discovery be made, the question of the origin of alphabetic writing must remain a matter of speculation. As the oldest relics of the alphabet have been found on the Syrian coast and among Semitic peoples in the lands immediately west

or east of it[1], it was presumably evolved somewhere in that region; and assuming this, it is difficult to see what people other than the Philistines were capable of this great achievement.

CHAPTER V

THE HEBREW MONARCHY

THE Monarchy, once the Hebrew people had attained to that stage of evolution, developed rapidly. Saul was scarcely more than a glorified tribal sheikh, ignorant, superstitious, coarse and boorish of tongue, but while his health lasted a good leader and a good fighter. Forty years afterwards a typical oriental king was on the throne—wealthy, voluptuous, and oppressive to his people. There could scarcely have been a greater contrast than Saul and Solomon. The disruption of the kingdom into its two elements—never very firmly cemented together—produced little change in the character of the Monarchy, either of the north or the south. The lurid picture drawn by Amos shews us the luxury and overbearing of the wealthy classes which we find in every community of the East.

[1] *I.e.* in Cyprus on the one hand and Moab on the other.

For the details of the history during this period, reference must be made to the familiar sources of information. Our function is to trace briefly the development of culture. The wars of David, foreign and civil, were hardly calculated to foster the arts of peace ; but his reign was marked by the extension of the two great auxiliaries to civilization whose introduction we noticed in the preceding chapter. Iron added countless new possibilities to life; and the simple alphabet rendered possible the beginning of a literature which was quite unattainable through the medium of the complex syllabaries that preceded it. Whatever may be the date of the various compositions to be found in the Psalter, as we have it, the tradition that David was himself a poet is too constant and too definite to be lightly set aside. Solomon, too, was an author, whatever the origin of the books traditionally ascribed to him may be: 1 Kings iv. 31–33 credits him with collections of proverbs, poems, and speculations on natural history. This is the only hint at an interest in natural science as such that we find in ancient Hebrew history. A fascinating sentence, however, in this passage shews how imperfect our knowledge necessarily is: we would fain have heard something of the four totally forgotten sages, Ethan, Heman, Calcol, and Darda, whose wisdom was worthy of affording a scale by which to measure that of Solomon.

A certain stimulus was given to architecture and the allied arts by the building operations of Solomon; especially, no doubt, at Jerusalem itself. It was, however, necessary for him to send abroad for his chief artificers; the Hebrews themselves were incapable of erecting buildings desired to be 'exceeding magnifical.' The king frankly admits that 'there is not among us any that can skill to hew timber like unto the Zidonians.' Hiram, Solomon's ally, sent timber, and also sent (to superintend the work) a foreman builder, who happened to have the same name as himself, the son of a Phoenician father and a Hebrew mother.

Thus, the works built during Solomon's reign were carried out by Phoenicians, no doubt in the style which the Phoenicians had learnt from Egypt and from the remnant of Crete. Of course not one stone of Solomon's Temple remains on another, and it is hopeless to try to reconstruct it from the insufficient data given in the Book of Kings and in Josephus. Heroic attempts have been made to do so, but the results are so much at variance with each other and with any architectural style that would be probable at the time of the construction, that no reliance can be placed upon them.

In the country towns we hear of fortifications being erected under Solomon's auspices. Remains of some of these, at Megiddo, Taanach, and Gezer,

have been identified with a fair amount of probability. They display massive masonry, of fairly large and well squared stones, which, apparently for the first time in the country, are often drafted.

In the minor arts no special improvement or novel influence is to be detected. Pottery for instance remains a crude and feeble degradation of the Aegean style; it indeed becomes more and more coarse and debased as time goes on, and as copies are made from copies and not from the originals. There is a total absence of any evidence of even a desire for originality. The patterns with which vessels were ornamented in the late Canaanite period disappear altogether, and their place is occupied by plain painted lines and coarse mouldings. In the same way such jewelry as is to be found is either imported directly from Egypt or is obviously founded on contemporary Egyptian models.

But Solomon made further attempts at an advance in civilization. Seeing the profit his Phoenician neighbours made by their trading vessels, he determined to set up a fleet of merchantmen for himself. The Mediterranean, however, was already occupied by the Phoenician ships, and to have attempted to trespass on their preserves would, no doubt, have led to trouble. But at the head of the Red Sea he found an outlet for his energies, and he carried on a trade with the lands of the South, apparently with

success. Even in this enterprise, however, he was compelled to employ Phoenician sailors (1 Kings ix. 27). The Hebrews were landsmen, and indeed had had no opportunities of practising the science of navigation. When Jehoshaphat attempted to revive this trade, his Red Sea fleet was wrecked ignominiously before it left its harbour at Ezion-Geber.

In many of the incidents narrated in the course of the history of the Kings we see strangely reflected unchanging Semitic psychological traits, an understanding of which is necessary to the comprehension of the history. Every modern Bedawy chief would sympathise with Hadad the Edomite[1], albeit his position was incomprehensible to the Egyptian king who had heaped favours upon him and even given him a royal Princess to wife. Everyone who has had traffic with orientals can understand how the irresistible impulse of hospitality, quite heedless of any possible inconvenience to the guest, compelled the old prophet of Bethel[2] to force the strange 'Man of God' to return with him, contrary to the express commands the latter had received.

But thanks to Muhammad, there has been one great change for the better. Drunkenness must have been a common vice: we read of the intoxication of Nabal, of Zimri, of Ben-Hadad:—even among women

[1] 1 Kings xi. 14.
[2] 1 Kings xiii. 11.

it was perhaps frequent though condemned, for Eli thought that Hannah was under the influence of wine[1]. The total eradication of this vice is one of the strongest testimonies to the power of Islam.

No doubt the widening breach between the northern and southern kingdoms served to retard the course of civilization. The constant border wars, rarely interrupted by alliances between individual kings, and the perpetual atmosphere of anxiety these must have caused, were quite sufficient to hinder progress in the arts of peace. Only one city—Samaria—was added by the Hebrews to the cities they inherited from their Canaanite predecessors. Only one king attempted to rival Solomon in the sumptuousness of his buildings: this was Ahab, who is said to have built an ivory palace, but like everything else he did, this was no doubt under the influence of his energetic Phoenician wife. Ahab himself is revealed throughout his history as a despicable creature. Ahab calls Elijah abusive names, but he meekly does what the prophet tells him, and humbles himself before him on every occasion; a word from Jezebel was enough to make even Elijah flee to Horeb. Ahab displays a feeble good nature toward Ben-Hadad even after defeating him, with disastrous consequences to his country and himself. When Naboth refuses to sell his vineyard, the King of Israel can do nothing

[1] 1 Sam. i. 14.

more than go to bed in a fit of childish sulks ; Jezebel again comes to the rescue. And in the final scene he ingeniously manages that Jehoshaphat shall represent him and be a target for assaults meant for himself: he slinks about the battle in disguise till a chance arrow finds him out. This is all we know about Ahab, and it is a truly sandy foundation on which to erect the extravagant eulogies which Renan and others have showered upon him.

Possibly Omri, and certainly Jeroboam II, and in the southern kingdom Uzziah, were kings that distinguished themselves in more than mere fighting. But there can hardly be any doubt that to the end the civilization they affected remained exotic, purchased in the great centres of culture around, and obtained at the expense of the country at large. The indignation of the rough rustic Amos is roused by the sight of the 'notable men of the chief of the nations' at Samaria languidly reclining on their ivory couches, eating of the choice of the meat, drinking wine by the bowlful, and tickling their ears with music. All these things had to be paid for, and Palestine, a country with no mineral resources, had nothing but its agricultural produce to offer in exchange. Even the more wealthy of the common folk could not venture to share in these delights, for whoso made a display of expensive comforts attracted to himself the unwelcome attention of the tax-gatherer.

Apart from military fortifications we know of but one piece of work undertaken for the public good during this period, and even that was military in essence, being intended to secure a supply of water to Jerusalem in case of siege. This is the Siloam tunnel, which carries water from the spring now known as the Virgin's Fountain to the Pool of Siloam, which once was inside the city walls. It is a pathetically helpless piece of engineering. The labourers started from each end apparently without guidance, and penetrated in a course nearly twice as long as was needed, until by a miracle the two parties approximated near enough to hear each other's picks. An Egyptian engineer, or even the ancient Canaanite who carried out the tunnel at Gezer, would have taken a pride in cutting something better than this irregular and ill-finished passage, winding its random way beneath the foundations of the City of David.

CHAPTER VI

THE CAPTIVITIES AND AFTER

THESE luxurious and corrupt kingdoms were abruptly cut short. The Assyrian swooped down on the northern kingdom, and having carried its people away dispersed them in a number of new lands. Here,

divided and with no possibility of a leader to keep alive their national traditions, they finally lost their individuality and became absorbed in the nations among whom they were planted. In their stead a mixed multitude from other sources was established in the lands of Samaria, who grafted on to their several ancestral beliefs the religion of 'the God of the land,' and who, maintaining their position through all the subsequent vicissitudes, still survive as that strange fossil of history, the tiny Samaritan community of Nablus.

The southern kingdom survived its northern neighbour for nearly 150 years; but in time it shared the same fate, though in a modified degree. Their milder masters, the Babylonians, did not set themselves deliberately to break the spirit of their captives, as the Assyrians had done with complete success. They permitted them the exercise of their religion and the inspiration of such teachers as Ezekiel. Thus were the national instincts stimulated and the way prepared for the return from captivity.

During the absence of the captives there is very little to tell of the history of Palestine, and still less regarding its civilization. The Assyrian script, speech, and legal formularies were used by whatever garrison the King of Assyria left behind in the northern kingdom. A couple of tablets found at Gezer illustrated this. But the Assyrian civilization was purely exotic

and made no impression on the country as a whole. No doubt the dregs of the Hebrew population were left behind in both the north and the south. From these the conquerors had nothing either to fear or to gain, and it was useful to keep the hewers of wood and drawers of water to the tasks to which they were accustomed.

A number of the Southern Hebrews escaped with Jeremiah to Egypt, and there founded the communities of which the now famous Aramaic papyri recently discovered at Aswân are the records.

Whatever Hebrew element may have remained in the northern kingdom became absorbed into the new settlers, who in part at least had adopted their religion and so paved the way for union. We therefore hear no more about them, except in so far as their blood dilutes that of the Samaritan community. The Southern Hebrews had no such temptation to lose their separate existence. They were pressed on all sides; by the remnant of the Philistines in the west, the Bedawin in the east and south, the Samaritans (as we may henceforth call them) in the north; and though in evil case, this pressure of hostile aliens served to keep them faithful to their national inheritance. Being for the greater part representatives of the tribe of Judah, the only important sept that survived, they adopted that name as a designation, rather than the national name of

Hebrew which had included all the rest. It is now for the first time that we meet with 'Jews.' The use of this name should be avoided in speaking of the pre-exilic history. To call Moses the leader of the Jews, and to refer to David or Solomon as kings of the Jews, are anachronisms.

The Kingdom of Judah fell in 586 B.C. In 538 B.C. the first 'instalment' of the return, that led by Zerubbabel with the permission of Cyrus, made its way back and reinforced the harassed remnant that had remained in the country. The years following may be called the Persian period of the History of Palestine. From the point of view of culture, it was a time of transition. The beginning of the Hellenic domination in the realm of civilization, destined a few generations later to be complete, may now be traced in some of the objects that excavation has revealed. Zerubbabel and his fellow-leaders began a restoration of the temple and of the walls of Jerusalem. Naturally the Samaritans and the Bedawin, who looked on the land of milk and honey as their destined prey, endeavoured to hinder the work of restoration, but, so far at least as the temple was concerned, they could not prevent its completion. This took place in 516 B.C. About 50 years later Ezra brought back a further contingent of the captives, and the work of restoration of the city walls was begun by Nehemiah in 445. The book

of the law was promulgated, the elaborate ritual reorganized, and the State of Jerusalem established, which endured until the destruction of the city by Titus in 70 A.D. It was, however, obliged to submit to Alexander the Great, who conquered Syria in 333 B.C., and to Ptolemy Soter, who took possession of the country in 320. In 314 Antigonus took Palestine, and thus began a contest between Egypt and Syria for the possession of the country which lasted spasmodically for over 100 years. In 175 B.C. Antiochus Epiphanes set himself to destroy the Jewish religion and to foster Hellenic ideas. He was met by the Maccabean revolt, which under the leadership of the heroic brothers, Judas, Jonathan and Simon, ultimately (in 142 B.C.) established Judaea as an independent theocratic state, whose visible ruler was the High Priest. This endured till 63 B.C. when Pompey captured the city. In 37 B.C., Herod with Roman aid, captured Jerusalem and became its king by favour of the Roman Republic.

Such, in barest outline, is the complicated history of this period. When we study the remains that have come down to us, we find that the leading impression they make is the rapid growth of Greek ideas in the country. The religion, art, and language of Greece influence the culture of Palestine with a force ever increasing as the years pass on. One of the most glorious monuments of the best period of

Attic art that has come down to us was found in Syrian soil—the so-called sarcophagus of Alexander, discovered in a tomb at Sidon. This was no doubt pillaged from somewhere else, and adapted as the coffin of some Sidonian notable; but it is none the less an indication that good Greek models were available for the native craftsmen to copy. Trade with Greece is amply attested by fragments of figured vases, both red and black, which are found in strata of the period, and by terracotta statuettes. Small figures of Greek divinities shew that such were worshipped, if only by Greek merchants settled in the country. A very extensive trade was carried on in Rhodian wine; countless handles of the wine-amphorae, stamped with governors' or merchants' names, are to be found through the whole country. Every ship that landed these vessels at the harbour must have contributed its share to the process of Hellenization. Classical architecture was copied, though its principles were never clearly understood by the native architects, and thus we find such curious mixtures of style as on the so-called Tomb of Absalom at Jerusalem, which presents us with *Ionic* pillars, supporting a *Doric* frieze, and a cornice above that if anything is Egyptian in its analogies.

The infusion of Greek ideas was thus inevitable, and was not due to the influence of the Syrian or the Egyptian monarchs, who did what they could

to advance it. In fact the attempts, especially that of Antiochus Epiphanes, to force on the complete Hellenization of the Jews, defeated their own end, as persecutions always do. The gradual spread of a leaven is very difficult to check ; the pressure of a tyrant provokes immediate opposition. In spite of Hellenizing traitors in the camp of the Jewish Church itself, who were ready to carry out the schemes of the Syrian pagan, the Jews successfully resisted force with force, and the little knot of those faithful to tradition maintained themselves in Jerusalem and in the district around.

On the other hand, though those living under the shadow of the temple might conserve their traditions, the country districts underwent many changes. The most noteworthy of these was the change of script and language. Some jar-handles, stamped with potters' names, belonging to the very end of the monarchy or the beginning of our present period, still display what is known as the Old Hebrew script. This is an alphabet identical (to all intents and purposes) with the Phoenician. On the coins struck at Jerusalem by the High Priests, after the successful issue of the Maccabean wars, this script continues in use, in a rather cursive style: while at the same time we begin to find, in inscriptions of a less formal kind, such as graffiti, a considerably modified form of the alphabet which is the immediate parent of the

familiar square Hebrew character of printed books. This, during the first century A.D., ousted from common use the earlier form, which, however, still survives in the script of the Samaritan community.

The Hebrew language disappeared before the Aramaic tongue of the Edomites and other Eastern septs that still pressed in upon the country. But neither language could stand before Greek, which by the time of Our Lord had practically become the current tongue of the whole country. Coins bore Greek legends: inscriptions, both formal and scribbled, are for the greater part in Greek: in rock-cut tombs, the limestone boxes (containing the bones cleared from the graves to make way for fresh interments) often bear scratched on them the name of the owner of the bones, and even on those found around Jerusalem at least one-half of the names are in Greek letters. Though Our Lord's mother-tongue was Aramaic, the fact that such Aramaic words as from time to time He used are recorded *literatim*, suggests that the language He habitually employed in all but the most familiar intercourse, and when under strong emotion, was something different.

The painted tomb of Apollophanes found at Beit Jibrin—by tomb-plunderers, unfortunately—is a favourable example of the art affected in the country during this period. And here as at all other times it is exotic. The figures of animals and wreaths

are the work of some provincial (Egyptian ?) artist, following Greek models, and using the Greek language. Nay, even the casual visitors to this tomb—such as the pair of lovers who scratched a quaint amatory dialogue on the jamb of the doorway—used the Greek tongue, as their graffiti shewed.

CHAPTER VII

THE GROWTH OF THE RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS IN ISRAEL

Palestine was the scene of the historical events round which our Faith is crystallised ; herein lies the especial importance of the country ; and no view of its civilization would be complete unless an endeavour be made to trace the steps by which its unique position was attained. The subject, however, cannot be adequately treated in a single chapter of a small book, and in such limits very little novelty is possible. The statement often made in popular books that 'the Bible is the best guide to Palestine' is grotesque ; but it is emphatically true that a knowledge of Palestine, its customs and ways of thought, is indispensable to a proper understanding of the Bible.

In the present chapter we are to trace (so far as our limits permit) the development among the

Hebrews of an instinct that they had a mission to fulfil in the world: that for some reason which they themselves never fully realised they were the 'chosen people.'

We must recognise from the first that, as in all developments, fossils of earlier conditions were preserved even down to a late date. We are startled by such in both the historical and the legal divisions of the Pentateuch. Notable cases are the legend of the unions of 'the sons of God and the daughters of men' in the one[1], the strange magical water-ordeal for testing conjugal fidelity[2] in the other. It is necessary to study the subject *ab ovo*, so to speak, and to go back to the Bedawin from which in remote times Israel sprang, in order to account for all the details with which we meet.

The free life of the Bedawy is proverbial; and yet there are probably few primitive races so limited in their outlook, mental and physical. Even his wanderings over the vast region which he inhabits are restricted—partly by the wide extent of sandy deserts incapable of supporting life, and partly by the hostility of rival tribes: the existence of most Bedawin is an eternal monotonous pilgrimage from watering-place to watering-place within a certain narrow limit of territory occupied by the tribe to

[1] Genesis vi. 1.

[2] Numbers v. 11.

which they belong. But the mental limitations of the Bedawy are even more rigid. The bare necessities of life are hard to come by, and must be strenuously fought for against nature and against his fellow-man ; and the fight practically absorbs all his energies and thoughts. A Muslim friend of the writer, who travelled to Medina on the first train of the Mecca railway, told how at the various stations on the way the wild Bedawin crowded round this marvel from the West that had disturbed the slumbers of their ancient land. But the wonders of the engine made not the smallest impression upon them. Their mental development was not sufficient to appreciate mechanical ingenuity. The only thing that aroused their enthusiasm was the plentiful store of *food* in the restaurant car. This fell within the narrow limits of their comprehension.

In the thirsty land, the spring of water and the spreading tree, or the rock that affords a grateful shade, are readily recognised as the gifts or even the actual manifestations of a divine power. These inanimate features of nature were the first messengers of God to man. The gloom of the valley or of the cavern first spoke of the Divine awe ; the cooling waters spoke of the Divine beneficence. There is, no doubt, an element of truth in the hackneyed gibe that man has made his god in his own image ; the deities of the earliest Semites (so far as we can

discern their nature from the relics of these primitive beliefs that are embedded in all the later records) are clearly modelled on the Bedawin sheikh. As the sheikh is favourable to his own people, so is the tribal god: as the sheikh is hostile to all other clans, so is the tribal god. As the jurisdiction of the sheikh is strictly localised within the limits of the clan, and the area of land in which are situated the camping-places of the clan, so is the jurisdiction of the tribal god. As the sheikh's life consists of an endless succession of plundering raids, wherein he is alternately the offending or defending party, varied by indulgence in the most elementary pleasures of the senses, so does the life of the tribal deity, magnified in so far as his greater power gives larger opportunities. As a celibate sheikh is unimaginable, so must a female partner be found for the tribal god. To claim, as some have done, that the life of the desert favours the development of a monotheism, is the most crude absurdity: if a central government be inconceivable on earth, much less can it be imagined in the abode of the gods. Strange rocks, strange springs, strange groves of trees have each one its local *numen* to be propitiated in his own way; even in comparatively late historic times we find that newcomers must learn 'the manner of the god of the land' when they would sojourn in his territory, and *per contra*, David must 'serve other gods' when he

is driven into exile, and Naaman must provide himself with two mules' burden of the earth of Palestine when he would erect an altar to the God of Palestine in his Syrian home.

There was, besides, an elaborate demonology, of jinn, afrits, ghuls, and the like, which is developed most elaborately in Arab and Jewish folk-lore. These creations of the imagination probably take their rise in the terrors excited by noisome or dangerous animals. This is an interesting and fruitful, though an obscure and difficult subject; but for our present purpose it may be left on one side.

Such is the crude foundation of Semitic religion. Traces of it meet us everywhere, even to this day, as we have already seen (*ante*, p. 40). The natural conservatism which all people display in their religious rites and beliefs is nowhere more emphatically displayed than in the Semite. In fact, the more experience one has of the Semitic race, the greater becomes one's amazement at the organizing power of Muhammad and his immediate followers. That one man could drive his influence so deeply into that religiously unimpressionable people, is one of the most marvellous phenomena in the whole world's history. But even Muhammad was obliged to adopt into his system from earlier faiths that grievous burden, the Ramadan fast, and the toilsome pilgrimage to Mecca.

In studying the religious development of the Hebrews, two important points must be emphasised from the first. Israel was surrounded by the traditions of five great empires—Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, the Hittites, and the Cretans. Directly or indirectly the Hebrews drew the whole of their secular arts, even the simplest, from one or other of these, as we have already seen: and in all material matters, peaceable or warlike, these empires were incomparably their superiors. And yet the polytheism of these imposing neighbours exercised no influence to speak of, upon the beliefs and ritual of the small and divided nation set in their midst. And the second point is like unto the first. Besides the great nations, Israel was surrounded by numbers of smaller tribes—Moab, Edom, Amalek, and the rest—their near kin in blood and language, and, in point of culture, very much on the same level with themselves. King Mesha of Moab, in his inscription, speaks of Israel and its king in much the same terms and probably much the same words as the latter would use of him, had an inscription giving us the other side of the story happily survived. And yet Israel, that unoriginal, semi-civilized people, who could not cut a tunnel straight through the rock of their metropolis, in the one realm of religion shot ahead of all their contemporaries and passed in the rapid course of a few centuries from polytheism (or perhaps more correctly

polydaemonism) through henotheism to the uncompromising monotheism of the later prophets and psalmists. When we take into account first the environment, which was not only hostile to such a development, but even left no room or precedent for such a conception, and, secondly, the exaggerated conservatism of religion in the Semite, to which we have already referred; when also we take into account the natural unfitness for new ideas which Israel displayed in material affairs: we can but wonder in silence. Nothing like it has ever happened in the world. The miracles recorded in the Hebrew Scriptures may possibly in time be all accounted for, with the advance of natural or critical science: but each step taken in that direction only brings into greater prominence this central miracle of the Old Testament, which no amount of *soi-disant* Rationalism can explain away.

And the miracle was even greater than would appear from the above statement. For almost to the end of the monarchy the worship of the High Places was retained to its fullest extent. These were shrines, probably of vast antiquity in many cases, fitted out with the symbols of primitive Semitic worship, the standing stone, the sacred tree, and so on, where rites typifying the annual renewal of nature and allied ideas were carried on. It is no doubt unscientific to use depreciatory adjectives

such as 'gross' or 'licentious' regarding these rites, as though they were wilfully indulged in for the special purpose of acting *contra bonos mores*: but we can scarcely doubt that they had such an influence on the character of those who took part in them as would make it yet more difficult for them to develop or to accept the prophets' definition of a Holy God.

It is a fascinating task to watch the steps by which the Hebrews were led along their unique path. It was the special privilege of this people that a succession of men was raised up from time to time who pointed out fresh steps of the road. Moses was the first of these. To his influence was due the formal adoption of the deity of Sinai as the God of the newly-founded nation, so that from the first the Hebrews worshipped a supreme God whose seat on earth was outside the territory which they occupied. This was very important. So long as a rigid local limitation hemmed in deities and their worshippers, progress was impossible: the work of Moses was the introduction of the conception of ex-territoriality. Suppliants like Elijah, when in dire straits, would make their way direct to the Mount of God: but in ordinary circumstances He could be enquired of in any of the shrines set up in His honour in the land of His adoption.

Of course the Mosaic system left the various local divinities where they were. These were propitiated

and consulted freely. We may here mention Clermont-Ganneau's interesting suggestion that the strange and scarcely intelligible story of the apparition of the 'Captain of the Host (*sōr-ṣebā*) of the Lord[1]' who appeared to Joshua on his entering the promised land, was really a vision of the *numen* of *Surṭabeh* (the great conical mountain that overlooks the Jordan valley at the point where the entrance must have taken place), thus encouraging and welcoming the new-comers. The Book of Judges is full of survivals and of indications that the people were still in an 'experimental' stage—their recurrent dallyings with the gods of the tribes round about, the sacred tree of Deborah, the idol made by Gideon, the sacrifice of Jephthah's daughter, the private oratory of Micah—all these are survivals of ancient rites and beliefs, not yet refined away.

To Samuel was due the second step. He seems to have grasped the idea that all these subordinate local deities were but manifestations of the one God of Israel. The school of prophets which he organized and directed no doubt helped to popularize this conception. Henceforth the High Places are shrines of Yahweh; and there is no reason to believe that any other deity was represented by the teraphim of David or the calves of Jeroboam: quite the contrary. At this point the polydaemonism of Israel becomes a

[1] Joshua v. 13.

henotheism. Chemosh and Milcom and other foreign deities are actual entities, and notice must be taken of them by a sojourner on foreign soil; but there is one God only within the land of Palestine and He only is to be there served. This, so stated, might seem to be merely a return to the condition with which we began: but there is this difference between Yahweh and any of His rivals—He is still localised *outside* His land, and He has now absorbed within Himself all the petty deities of spring and forest and mountain with which the fancies of the earliest dwellers had peopled it.

Women as a rule are more tenacious of early beliefs than men. This is especially true of Oriental women, whose cramped existence makes them incapable from an early age of receiving new impressions. Men, like David or Naaman, might under stress of circumstances make a temporary or permanent change in their religion without much searching of heart; but a woman drafted into a royal harem is likely to bring her own gods with her, and when the husband is weak through senility, like Solomon, or constitutionally like Ahab, he is very apt to be influenced by his partner to follow in her way. Thus we find the disturbing element of foreign cult introduced by these two kings; but their influence was only temporary and did not outlive them. When Ahab's son had an accident, he did not trouble

himself about the Tyrian Baal, whom Ahab, under Jezebel's orders, had spent his energies in trying to impose upon his people: he sent off instead to an ancient oracle in the land of the Philistines. And similarly we hear nothing of Solomon's irregularities having any permanent influence after his death.

The third of the great religious leaders of the Hebrews was Asa, the king, inspired apparently by an obscure prophet named Azariah son of Oded. His work was ritual and moral, however, rather than doctrinal, and consisted in a purification of the rites and ceremonies at the shrines of the High Places. In him we see the awakening of a consciousness that the practices at these shrines were incompatible with true religion. Thus Asa set a standard of morality for all later time to which none of his predecessors had attained, and he is fully worthy of a place in the roll of the leaders of Hebrew thought.

The brilliant meteor-flash of Elijah, coming none knows whence, and going none knows whither, cannot be passed over altogether in silence, though the whole time of his labours was spent in leading the opposition to Ahab's religious innovations. It is, however, instructive to notice that there was never such strong opposition presented to any of the *legitimate* reforms of the national religion. It was as though attempts to lead the people away from the destined paths were

fated to be specially resisted. Elijah is in this respect the forerunner of the Maccabees.

With Amos the herdman of Tekoa, who uttered his magnificent denunciation of the corruptions of Samaria in the reign of Jeroboam II, begins the long series of prophets who crowned the work of those who had prepared the way for them. We cannot give space to analyse their work in detail. Step by step an astonishing drama unfolds itself before us. Men come forward one by one, and speak now in impressive prose, now in poetry which for grandeur has never been surpassed on this earth, and one by one the calves, and the standing stones, and all the other ancient paraphernalia are thrown out as unclean things on the rubbish heap, and Israel realizes at last that the God whom for countless ages—back to the far off days of his nomad Bedawy life—he has ignorantly worshipped, He is the God of the whole earth. And this portent happens not among a reflective people like the Egyptians, or an artistic and philosophical people like the Greeks, or a practical nation like the Romans—but among the Hebrews, a people who were incapable of so much as making a clay waterpot without having a foreign model to copy—and even then made it clumsily!

That all the people, or even the majority, could rise to the heights of the prophetic inspiration is of course unthinkable, and both literature and the results

of excavation are against it. Down to a very late date small pottery models of cows are very common, which there can hardly be any doubt were popular images of the national God. Some of these figures may have been toys, but the preponderance of cow



Fig. 5. TERRA-COTTA PLAQUES 'POURTRAYING THE QUEEN OF HEAVEN.' From examples found at Gezer.

figures over representations of other animals could not be accounted for if such a simple explanation received unqualified adoption. The cult of the Queen of Heaven, denounced by Jeremiah (vii. 18, xliv. 13), is aptly illustrated by the plaques of terracotta[1] with

[1] These plaques are perhaps referred to by Jeremiah xliv. 18, in the phrase 'cakes to pourtray' the queen of heaven. The word

figures of a female divinity in low relief stamped upon them, found in numbers in every excavation; such



Fig. 6. Terra-cotta Plaques 'pourtraying the Queen of Heaven.' Found at Gezer. The left-hand example is highly conventionalised.

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translated 'cakes' is used only in the two passages relating to this divinity.

plaques were in use in Gezer even down to the time of the Maccabees. The traditions set down by the Yahvist and the Elohist reveal the simple anthropomorphisms of popular belief that had their roots in the primitive 'great chieftain' theory of deity. The early chapters of Genesis shew that the notions of cosmogony current in Palestine were at least founded on the Babylonian stories of the beginnings of things.

But here again we meet with matter for wonder. The wild tales of Marduk and Tiamat, of Gilgamesh and the monstrous Ea-bani, of the gods gathering like flies round the sacrifices, of all that welter of weird imaginings—out of these unpromising materials has been fashioned, with the most exquisite literary taste and the most profound insight, an eternal allegory of creative power, of sin, retribution, and redemption, which a child can understand, yet whose depths the wisest cannot fathom. And this has been done by the Hebrews—a people who never during their national existence made the smallest contribution to material civilization!

To such people the prophets had to speak in terms they could understand: indeed, they themselves had their human limitations. In our own restless age, when discoveries and inventions are antiquated almost before they become generally known, we are beginning to learn the changefulness of things. But in earlier and quieter times this was not so. A Plantagenet

king or knight might endeavour to save his worthless soul by making over a few acres of his land 'for ever' to some shrine of St Thomas of Canterbury; never dreaming that in a century or two the shrine was destined to fall under Puritan axes and hammers, and the land, perhaps, to pass ultimately into the occupation of a worthy Nonconformist farmer, to whom Becket is but a name in a half-forgotten school-book. And likewise even the prophets of Israel clothed the everlasting kernel they had discovered in a husk belonging to their own time. They or their auditors being unable to conceive of the worship of their God apart from the temple, they drew the gorgeous dream-picture of a great central shrine for the whole world, situated in Jerusalem. It was reserved for a Greater than they to break the husk, and to teach that 'neither in this mountain nor in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father......but in spirit and truth.'

But the husk, though broken, still conceals the kernel for many, who have thus become obsessed with an idea that the Jews are divinely fore-ordained to re-people Palestine. We can all warmly sympathise with the *national* aspirations of a people which has behind it a long record of oppression and persecution at our Christian hands; but it is deplorable that theories so materialistic should mingle with the *religion* of so many Christian people. From such a doctrine it is but a step to the sheer lunacy of searching for the

lost ten tribes in this nation or that, or to the objectionable traffic in 'signs of the times'—a prying into mysteries whereof we are plainly warned no one knoweth, not even the angels of heaven, neither the Son, but the Father only. It is not irrelevant, in a history of Palestinian civilization, to allude to this consequence of the formulae of the prophetic vision: because modern attempts to create an artificial 'fulfilment of prophecy' by crowding the country with Jews from many nations and of many dialects, whatever may be its ultimate outcome, cannot fail to modify the future history of the country in one way or another.

The elaborate legal restrictions to which the Jewish people submitted themselves after their return from the Babylonian captivity were designed to keep alive this great discovery. In the face of all the distracting influences to which they were exposed after they had re-established themselves in the Holy City, such restrictions were necessary. The persecutions of Antiochus saved the law from shipwreck on the rising tide of Hellenism; and then the long mission of preparation entrusted to the chosen people was accomplished. For when the fulness of the time came, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, that He might redeem them which were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

Thus the river, that rose in a bubbling spring in some Arabian oasis, flowed God-guided into the Ocean.

CHAPTER VIII

ROMAN AND BYZANTINE

THE Romans began to interfere in Palestinian politics in B.C. 63, when Pompey, in the course of his campaign against Tigranes, was called in to settle the dispute that had arisen between the brothers Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, successors of the valiant Maccabean leaders. The Jews however refusing to submit to the arbitration of a Gentile, Pompey laid siege to and captured Jerusalem, on which occasion he entered the temple and penetrated into the Most Holy Place. From this time onward the native kings ruled under Roman suzerainty. In the turmoil caused by a Parthian raid on the country, in B.C. 70, the Edomite (Idumaean) Herod managed to lay his hand on the governorship, and, having with Roman aid captured Jerusalem, he established himself as king in 37 B.C., of course by the consent and under the suzerainty of the Roman republic.

Herod seems to have set himself to imitate the traditional glories of Solomon. As Solomon built the temple and a fine palace, so did Herod. Indeed he

improved upon the example of his prototype, for besides these buildings he erected a number of others designed to impress and to please the people. He built, for example, an amphitheatre at Jerusalem, the very site of which is now, however, unknown. So far as we can tell anything of the Herodian buildings at Jerusalem, they seem to have been entirely in the Roman styles, and probably were designed by Roman architects. Other cities, notably Samaria, were similarly enriched. The foundations of a gigantic temple on the summit of the mound of that city have been discovered in the course of the excavations now being prosecuted; and a second temple, a hippodrome, and a street of columns have always been conspicuous attractions to visitors to this site.

Herod died B.C. 4, and his kingdom was divided among various members of his family. This division made it easy for the Roman authority to usurp to itself all the real power, as is obvious throughout the narrative of the gospels. But the tension at last reached breaking point: the Jews revolted; and in 70 A.D. they were crushed by the terrible siege and the fall of Jerusalem.

The culture of this hundred and thirty years, between the siege of Pompey and that of Titus, has been very little illustrated by recent exploration. None of the sites excavated, with the exception of Samaria, have yielded any remains of importance

belonging to this time. A few rock-cut tombs, the base of one of Herod's towers, the foundations of the temple enclosure, and some odds and ends, are all that remain within the City of Jerusalem of the activity of the great builder. Outside, the immense reservoirs between Jerusalem and Hebron probably, and the aqueducts by which water is carried thence to the former city certainly, were made under Roman superintendence about this time. From an old wives' tale that the pleasant valley where these reservoirs are situated was the scene of the Song of Songs, they are popularly called Solomon's Pools: the name is not altogether inappropriate if they be actually the work of the Edomite Solomon.

An important change was now taking place throughout the country. From the beginning people had lived huddled together in walled cities. But just about this time we find the walled cities are being deserted, and people are settling instead in wall-less villages. This is an eloquent testimony to the advantage for the country of the *Pax Romana*. It can hardly be an accident that the occupation of every walled city which has been as yet excavated in Palestine, with the possible exception of Samaria[1],

[1] Some Arab and Crusader work was found at Tell es-Safi, but there is a gap between this and older remains into which a ruined village of the Roman period, at the base of the mound, fits neatly. This apparent exception therefore accords with the rule.

ends just about the middle of the first century B.C.: and that it is to this date that the earliest of the numerous small ruins which dot the fields of the whole country are to be assigned, if we may judge from the sherds of pottery strewn on their surface.

The reason is very simple. The early cities were set on hill-tops, a circumstance which, if it had the disadvantage that they could not be hid, had the important compensation that they could not be attacked without difficulty, and could not be commanded from overlooking heights. While every man's hand was against his neighbour, a hill-top city surrounded by a high wall was the form which the dwellings of the community assumed, of absolute necessity. But the dwellers in the city had to pay dear for the comparative security that this situation gave them. The toilsome daily climb, the difficulty of procuring water, the close and crowded existence, the necessary remoteness from their crops in the valleys—which an enemy might destroy before they had time to come down to defend them—all these drawbacks to city life must have been a constant vexation. When we add that in the wars and disturbances of the last five centuries B.C. the sedentary population must have suffered considerable loss, so that they were barely able to repair their walls if broken down, or to defend them if repaired: we can scarcely wonder that a time of peace was marked by

an exodus from these inconvenient towns. Little villages sprang up everywhere, situated in the very middle of the cultivated fields, and close to springs. These villages were often built of the materials of the old cities, and often bore the names of the old



Fig. 7. Ruin of a Byzantine Village.

This ruin bears the name of the Biblical Tekoa, but as there is no trace of earlier occupation it cannot be on its exact site.

sites. This is the explanation of the anomaly which meets us over and over again when we try to study Bible Geography. We deduce from Biblical references

the probable district in which to find the site of a certain town. We examine the map of the district, and there we find a modern Arabic name almost exactly resembling the old Hebrew name: and we visit the site, confidently expecting to have the pleasure of strolling over a great mound of accumulated *débris* and of wondering what may lie hidden under our feet—but find when we reach the spot the meagre remains of some wretched little Roman or Byzantine village, with outcrops of rock in and around it, shewing that no earlier remains can lie beneath the surface. There are not merely five or six, but dozens—it is hardly an exaggeration to say hundreds—of such cases scattered in every corner of Palestine and Syria. It cannot be said too strongly that the identification of any Biblical site, based on similarity of name alone, even if the locality be in a suitable place, must never be allowed to pass unquestioned. A personal examination of the ruins by someone who has acquired a knowledge of the pottery styles[1], and who can thus assign the limits of date

[1] Of the importance of potsherds in helping to the identification of ancient sites one example may be given. The writer thinks he may venture to claim to have settled the long-fought dispute concerning the site of Capernaum, in favour of *Talhum* as against the rival sites, *'Oreimeh* and *Khan Minyeh*. The scanty fragments of pottery at Talhum are of just the right date, those of 'Oreimeh are far too early, and those of Khan Minyeh too late. It follows that Talhum is the correct site.

of the occupation, is absolutely indispensable. It will be found *in the majority of cases* that the identifications put forward with confidence by Robinson and other even more recent topographers, fail when tested by this criterion. The old name has been transferred, with the building materials. In a generation the old site is forgotten: in a century or two no one knows that there was a city there at all, and some new and trivial name may be given to the mound that covers it. Hence arises a two-fold perplexity for the student of Historical Geography: the number of large and important mounds bearing names of no significance; and the number of insignificant sites bearing names of the foremost importance.

The abortive rising of Simon Bar-Cochba, in 132–5 A.D. had no effect but that of making even more determined the attempts of the Emperors to Romanize Palestine. Hadrian re-founded Jerusalem as a pagan city, with a Temple of Jupiter on the site of the Jewish Temple, and (it is alleged) a Temple of Venus on the site of the Holy Sepulchre; forbade the Jews even to come within sight of the city; and attempted to break with all tradition by renaming it Aelia Capitolina. This name, however, did not survive long, unlike Sebaste, the name which Herod the Great gave to Samaria in honour of Augustus[1].

[1] A name however ignored, perhaps with intention, by New Testament writers, *e.g.* St Luke (Acts viii. 5).

and Flavia Neapolis, the new name of Shechem, given it after its conquest by Vespasian in 67 A.D. These names, as Sebusteh and Nablus respectively, still survive as the current names of these towns. Banias (= Paneas), Kuloniyeh (= Colonia), Trablus (= Tripolis), Fundakumiyeh (= Pentecomias), are other examples of the survival of exotic place-names in modern Arab Palestine, but such are uncommon.

Apart from roads, aqueducts, and other military or semi-military works, there are however no very conspicuous traces of Roman civilization in the country. The language remained Greek, and in this language are written by far the greater proportion of the inscriptions of this period that the country has yielded: comparatively few Roman inscriptions, if we except milestones, have come to light, and even these often bear inscriptions wholly or partly in Greek.

The Jews, driven thus from their capital at Jerusalem, found a resting place in Tiberias, a city that had been founded by Herod Antipas and so named in honour of the Emperor Tiberius. The community of Jews which thus centred in a city, previously avoided as heathen and unclean, must have had a curious internal history, of which not very much is known. Their literary monument is the so-called 'Jerusalem Talmud'; their tangible monuments are those very remarkable buildings the

Synagogues of Galilee, which still survive, though in a sad state of dilapidation, from the beginning of the third century A.D. These buildings throw unexpected side-lights on the Judaism of their time. They are rectangular, the doorways, with one exception, facing



Fig. 8. Façade of the Ruined Synagogue at Meiron.

south. Within, a central space is marked off by pillars along three sides of the building: behind the pillars runs an aisle. But the remarkable point about the Synagogues is their sculpture. Not only

are classical mouldings and ornament the basis of the rich decoration which all these buildings bear, but representations of living creatures, lions, eagles, and the like are freely introduced, and even human figures. Nay, even such heathenish figures as genii with swags and garlands, and centaurs, are occasionally to be found; notably in the highly ornate but much ruined Synagogue at Kerazeh (Chorazin).

Meanwhile, Christianity was spreading throughout Europe, and those who submitted to its sway were beginning to feel the desire to see its birthplace for themselves.

At the head of the endless march of pilgrims comes the Empress Helena (326 A.D.) who zealously set herself to identify and to commemorate the sacred scenes on which her Faith was founded. The Church of the Nativity at Bethlehem, the Holy Sepulchre at Jerusalem, and the foundations of the great Church discovered only the other day on the Mount of Olives, are monuments of Helena's Christian enthusiasm. It matters not a whit whether Helena was right or wrong in her selection of the sites. So far as it was humanly possible, she built worthy memorials of the great events she desired to commemorate, which through all the subsequent changes, and despite all the petty squabbles of rival sects, have been hallowed by the continuous veneration of 1600 years. Right or wrong, that is as near as we shall ever get to such

a site as the Holy Sepulchre. It is deplorable that the Muslims should be obliged to guard Christians from fellow-Christians in this Church: it is deplorable that such scenes as the ceremony of the Holy Fire should disgrace it: but it is nothing but fatuity to protest against these blemishes by exalting an insignificant third-century rock-tomb into the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea, by wasting good building-land in laying out an imaginary restoration of Joseph's garden, and by squandering hundreds of pounds (which would have been so welcome for scientific exploration!) on acquiring and maintaining the resulting outrage on common sense. If the shrine of Helena inspires in some overstrung natures an ecstasy of devotion dangerously bordering on hysteria, the cult of the so-called 'Gordon's tomb' is mere sentimentalism, without an atom of historical possibility behind it.

A few years after Helena—in 333 A.D.—came a nameless wanderer from Bordeaux, who worshipped and departed to his home, where he wrote an itinerary, all too short, of his travels. Some random details of Jerusalem topography which he vouchsafes us—apparently chance recollections that happened to recur to him when writing out his notes—are of immense value, so far as they go. Meagre though it be, the Itinerary of the Bordeaux Pilgrim has the distinction of being the first of the long series

of books written about Palestine from personal observation.

On the partition of the empire, in 394 A.D., Palestine naturally formed a part of the heritage of the East. It was by then practically completely Christian. All the tombs from that period which have been opened bear Christian devices or contain Christian relics. Churches and monasteries spread over the country, especially under the care of Justinian I, who carried out many important buildings —such as the Church of St Mary at Jerusalem, now (in a mutilated form) the Mosque *el-Aksa*.

Except for the sanguinary raid of Chosroes, King of Persia, in 616, life in the country during the Byzantine period seems to have been quiet enough. The multiplication of small villages without formal defences went on unchecked, and this in itself is an indication that the people on the whole lived in as much security as could be expected. Mosaic pavements of great richness, not only in Jerusalem but even in occasional village church sites, testify to an appreciation for art. The churches, though small, were often richly sculptured, and such fragments as remain are of great interest. No excavations have been formally carried out in any Byzantine sites, so that but little can be said about the life of the people: it was probably not unlike that which we see mirrored in one of the modern villages, such as

Jifna, Beit Jala, or Bethlehem, which have succeeded in holding fast to the Christian faith that they trace back to Byzantine Palestine. Perhaps, like the Plantagenets mentioned in the previous chapter, the people thought that the clock of time would surely now stand still—

But Arabia lies in the background, and Arabia was full to overflowing: and through Arabia one was journeying to and fro, driving camels, who was soon to drive half the world.

CHAPTER IX

THE LAST STRUGGLE OF WEST AND EAST

Of Muhammad, let it suffice here to say that he was born about 570 or 571; that about the age of forty he began to feel a stirring of revolt within him against the gods of his fathers: and that he devoted the rest of his life to the development and the promulgation of the religion he proposed to substitute. His models were now Judaism and now Christianity, though he wofully misunderstood the historical basis as well as the spiritual essence of both systems: and he tempered them with his own spirit and with the peculiar mental standpoints of his people, so that he gave the product an individuality all its own.

Slowly but surely, though opposed in a hundred ways, the movement spread, until for the first time in the countless ages of the past practically the whole of the peninsula realised that it was of one kin, as it was of one speech. The barriers burst, and Arabia, bound together by a common faith as it had never been bound before, poured forth on the fat lands to the north and west with a sheer dead weight that none could resist. The Byzantine empire crumbled away like straw before them. In 634 'Omar, the second successor of Muhammad, defeated its hosts at the battle of the Yarmuk, and shortly afterwards he captured Damascus and Jerusalem. Henceforth, save for the interlude described in this chapter, Palestine was a Muslim country. And Muhammad had not been in his grave a hundred years before Islam had spread from Baghdad to Spain.

The new rulers began well. 'Omar set an example of tolerance to his new Christian subjects that was rare in those early days, and is by no means universal even in our own enlightened times. The Christians were permitted to retain the Holy Sepulchre Church and to continue their worship without interference. But naturally they could not expect to have it all their own way as heretofore: there were curtailments of their liberty here and there which they deeply resented, but could not overcome, and as time went on these tended to increase.

The rigid puritanism of the Muhammadan system, in matters of art, did not make for any very high level of culture. The representation of living creatures was *tabu* to an extent that had never been equalled before. Geometrical ornament was the most that was allowed; and this, founded on Byzantine models, developed wondrously, till it reached a height of subtlety equalled only by the highest attainments of the Celtic artists.

For 'Abd el-Melek, the fifth from 'Omar, was reserved the honour of erecting a permanent building over the Holy Rock of the Temple site. This rock is the summit of the so-called Moriah, the Temple hill, and being the probable site of the altar of burnt sacrifice was sacred to the dispersed of Israel, in despite of whom the Christians during their time of domination had permitted it to become defiled with rubbish and filth. 'Omar cleansed it—for strange legends hallowed the Holy Rock in Muslim eyes as well—and, it appears, erected a temporary structure over it to preserve it from further profanation. For this structure 'Abd el-Melek substituted the far-famed Dome of the Rock, often inaccurately called the Mosque of 'Omar. The outlines of the exterior of this building are unpleasing, and even its gorgeous incrustation of blue tiles cannot altogether redeem its stiffness; but when we cross the threshold all is changed, and we are bewildered by a riot of beauty

which no pen can adequately describe, and to which, perhaps, no pencil can do justice. As we examine in turn the mosaics, the coloured windows, the split and polished marble slabs, the painted decoration, we are every moment confronted by some new flash of artistic inspiration that drives from our minds what we have been looking at the moment before. Deplorable attempts at restoration and renovation—and even alteration—have been made in these days, when Arab art is but the pale ghost of its glorious youth. These are offences that diminish the effect the building would otherwise make: a yet greater offence is the persecution the visitor invariably suffers from the grovelling bakhshish-hunting custodians who never leave him for an instant alone. Notwithstanding, there are surely few buildings in the world that make a deeper impression on the mind than does the Dome of the Rock.

And yet, though the Dome of the Rock reveals the strength of Arab art in those early days, it reveals its weakness too. The canker of shoddiness, which has by now eaten it through and through, is already at work. Thus, the pillars of the colonnade which surrounds the Rock were not specially made or designed for the building, but pillaged from any other structures that happened to possess them. And so in this part of the Dome of the Rock we have a heterogeneous assembly of Corinthian and Byzantine pillars,

which not being of uniform length are brought to a standard height by blocks, large or small as may be required, set on the tops of the capitals. These blocks do not improve the architectural effect of the building. In fact the art of the Arabs was always decorative rather than constructional. Their architecture depended almost entirely on its applied ornament for the effect it produced.

The first enthusiasm of unity soon wore off. Sects began to multiply. Unregenerate human nature began once more to assert itself, and the comparative quiet which had made the Dome of the Rock possible, gave place to a wild *Walpurgisnacht* of envy, hatred, and malice, which lasted for 300 years. Omayyades and 'Abbasides, Carmathians and Ikhshidides, Fatimites and Seljuks pass in turn before us; and though Arab literature attained to an important place during these troubled times, it is easy to understand that the endless quarrels and fighting between these rival clans made any advance in art and civilization impossible.

To re-tell the dreary story of those distracted centuries is not our purpose here. The climax was perhaps reached in the saturnalia inaugurated by the accession of the Fatimite caliph Hakim, in 996 A.D. The portent of a madman in absolute power was once more seen in this imperfect world of ours, with a completeness to be matched only in Rome under the

Caesars. But Caligula and Nero, a thousand years after they had gone to their own place, were on the earth as though they had never been; whereas to this hour the religion of the brave yet kindly Druzes of Lebanon is founded on the ravings of this maniac.

As might be expected, it was not long before the tolerance extended at first to the Christians gave place to persecution. They began to suffer, in like manner as they had made the Jews suffer in the day of their power. Their churches were desecrated, if not actually destroyed, as was the Holy Sepulchre by the Caliph Hakim; and they themselves were compelled to submit to many indignities. Pilgrims especially were subject to extortion and abuse of every kind. The spectacle of the troubles to which they were exposed aroused the righteous indignation of Peter the Hermit, who towards the end of the eleventh century set Europe on fire with a holy ardour to rescue the shrines of the Faith out of the hands of the infidel.

Thus began the Crusades, the most far-reaching movement of the Middle Ages. A lifetime would scarcely be sufficient to trace out the causes that led to them, the complex history of the enterprises themselves, and their manifold influence on European politics, art, and literature. The first outburst of the movement strangely resembled the first outburst of Islam itself. As Islam united the scattered tribes of

Arabia, so did the Crusader zeal unite the warring nations of Europe into one irresistible whole; and as Islam found nothing to oppose it but the moribund Byzantine empire, so the Crusaders found Islam torn in pieces and ready to perish from internal dissensions.

Though the waste of life was enormous in the first march on Jerusalem, Godfrey of Boulogne, destined to be the first of the Latin kings of Jerusalem, led his victorious army into the Holy City on the 15th July, 1099. And so began the century wherein for the last time West contended with East for Palestine. But Godfrey enjoyed his well-earned reign a year only. On his tomb—standing till the beginning of the last century, when it was destroyed in jealousy by a rival sect—was engraved the famous inscription:—

HIC IACET INCLITVS GODOFREDVS DE BOVILLON QVI TOTAM ISTAM TERRAM ACQVISIVIT CVLTVI CHRISTIANO CVIVS ANIMA REGNET IN CHRISTO[1].

Acquisiuit—in this well-chosen verb lies the condemnation of the Crusaders, which all unwitting the author of this inscription wrote. For once, Christianity fought Islam with its own weapon, and met the inevitable failure destined for them that take the sword.

[1] There are slight differences, chiefly in spelling, in the renderings of different copyists. The above is the version given by Henri de Beauveau in his *Relation Journalière du voyage du Levant*, 1604.

MONS CALVARIVS

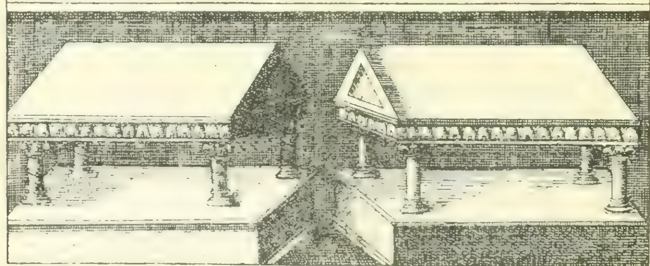


Fig. 9. The Tombs of Kings Godfrey and Baldwin I.

F is the tomb of Godfrey, E of Baldwin I. They are shewn below to a larger scale. G in the foreground is the Stone of Unction. In the background is the chapel of Mount Calvary, and to the left the entrance to the ambulatory behind the apse of the church. The tombs are now completely destroyed, and practically everything to be seen in the illustration has been re-modelled.

It is perhaps the saddest of all histories. As the sun rises hot and bright on a summer morning, so burns the glowing enthusiasm over Europe, and so shine the splendid first leaders of the advancing army. But clouds begin to gather soon, as jealousies arise within the newly-planted colony, and as the diseases with which warm climates punish ignorance and carelessness and indulgence break out among them: even the taint of leprosy spares not the throne itself. And the clouds darken to a deeper black as the day advances, for we hear yet darker tales of intrigues, and poisonings, and assassinations, and of disunion and unpreparedness in the face of Islam step by step retrieving its lost ground. Then comes the thunderburst of Hattin, and the Latin kingdom falls before the great leader, Salah ed-Din. And a chill night wind bears to our ears across the centuries the sound of the wailing of little children, as the sun sets in an angry, cruel red—fit emblem of the horrors unspeakable of the Children's Crusade of 1212 A.D.

The remarkably rapid degeneration, in both physical and moral well-being, which the Crusaders began to display almost immediately after establishing themselves in the goal of their desires, is probably to be explained in one word—malaria. If the Children of Israel were assisted in their invasion by 'hornets,' literal or metaphorical, the *Anopheles* mosquito is equally effective as a bulwark for the

defenders against rash intruders. The mosquito always scents out a new-comer into its sphere of influence. Two people, one a stranger, the other a six months' resident, may sleep together in a room or tent; in the morning the first will be stung all over, the second will have been left untouched. Very likely every man in the army of the Crusaders was inoculated with malaria before he had been forty-eight hours within the borders where the disease was and is endemic. The demoralising effect of malaria on both mind and body is one of its most serious features; and when we think of the utter ignorance of medical or sanitary science that prevailed in the twelfth century—when we picture these men carrying habits of life suited to their temperate lands into the blasting siroccos of Palestine, we cease to wonder at the fate of the Latin kingdom.

The Crusader stock gradually died out; its last traceable descendants appear to have been hopelessly degenerate half-breeds. This is a point worth remembering, for there seems to be an idea current that the (alleged) beauty of the modern natives of Bethlehem is due to an infusion of Crusader blood. There is no necessity to seek a cause so remote. Bethlehem, thanks to its trade in mother-of-pearl, is a fairly wealthy village, and good feeding is quite sufficient to account for any superiority the inhabitants can claim over their less favoured neighbours.

Acquisiuit is not written only on Godfrey's shattered tomb. It is written large over the face of the land as well, and the letters with which it is spelt are the castles, still huge and imposing even in their gaunt ruin. It is written in the churches—some turned to mosques; some guarded against desecration by the devotion of recently established monasteries; some standing derelict and dilapidated in the open fields and valleys, and vanishing piecemeal before the builder who finds in them stone ready cut for his use. It is written in the hearts of the Arabs, who to this day tell of the great deeds their forebears did, when they slaughtered the Christians; and who teach to their children a deathless hatred of those who once *totam istam terram acquisiuerunt cultui Christiano.*

CHAPTER X

TILL YESTERDAY

THE Latin kingdom fell in 1187, but the ebbing wavelets of Crusader enthusiasm continued to beat on the shore of Palestine till 1248. A few coast towns were obstinately held by the Europeans—which, however, dropped from their hands one by one till at last Acre only was left. This resisted till

1291, and then the chapter of Frankish occupation was closed.

Once more Palestine and Syria became a prey to warring Asiatic tribes. Salah ed-Din, becoming master of Egypt soon after his victory at Hattin, united Palestine to the throne of that country. For rather more than 300 years it remained in the hands of the Egyptian sultans, though invaded and plundered from time to time by the Kharezmians from Central Asia and by the Mongols. So matters lasted till 1516, when war broke out between the Turks and the Egyptians. The former were victorious, and Palestine became thenceforward a Turkish province.

If the nation be happy that has no history, then Palestine for the next three centuries was truly favoured. A better illustration of the foolishness of this stupid proverb could not be found. The people of Palestine had no history—no relations with the great world around except through the intermediation of the Turkish tax-gatherer—no distractions or interests or resources or employments—nothing in short to occupy them save the ancient and unprofitable pastime of quarrelling among themselves. As time went on, Turkish rule became more and more nominal; so long as taxes were duly paid they might quarrel as they liked—indeed, is not *divide et impera* an ancient principle of sovereignty?

So the old divisions of Kais and Yaman, of North Arabia and South, transplanted among the sedentary fellah populations from their nomad ancestors, sundered neighbouring villages in an unending hostility that is but superficially healed even now. The tribal sheikhs practically directed all the affairs of the people: save that houses were substituted for tents, and that the Turkish master was ever in the background, the bad old traditions of Arabian desert life were perpetuated unchanged.

A few individuals stand out more conspicuous than their fellows in this long dull time of pointless turmoil. Such was the Druze prince Fakhr ed-Din, whose alliance with and sojourn among the Venetians inspired him with an unusual taste for European art; which he made a pathetic attempt to cultivate on the uncongenial soil of his native land. Such, for other reasons, was Ahmed the Butcher, who at the end of the eighteenth century established himself in a practically independent kingdom centring at Acre, and extending over all Northern and Central Palestine—a tyrant who for sheer loathsome savagery can scarcely be matched, even in the records of the kings of Assyria. Such, too, was the picturesque freebooter 'Akili Agha. But these are merely names that stand out the more conspicuously because they are set in a dead level of monotony.

From the incidents preserved to us by the pilgrims

and travellers of this time, who have left us records of their adventures, we see something of the social life of the country. Some of the more important of these are named in the bibliography at the end of this book. We must never forget, however, in using such authorities, that they were perforce superficial observers. A residence even of two or three years is not enough to give an insight into the inner heart of a community so complex and so foreign; how then can we trust the judgment of a traveller scampering through the country, to whom every experience was a complete novelty, and every native a potential assassin?

The capture of Jaffa and the Siege of Acre, by Napoleon I, in 1799, and the subsequent episode of the seizure of the country by the Egyptian rulers Muhammad Ali and Ibrahim Pasha, were the beginning of the end of this unsatisfactory condition of matters. The Turks, as soon as they had re-asserted their sovereignty after the Egyptian interlude, began a series of reforms, calculated to put down once for all the old sheikh government which had made life and property everywhere unsafe, and had made travel between the tribal territories difficult, if not impossible. The warring elements were brought together under at least a veneer of unity. Kais and Yaman were compelled to lay down their arms. Improved facilities of communication were established, and the

country once more entered into relations with Europe. Compared with the intolerable excesses of such creatures as Ahmed the Butcher, the rule even of the worst of the Sultans was not too tyrannical. Under Turkish rule Palestine might have become a prosperous and happy country, but for the three inevitable concomitants of the government of that empire—the growing burden of excessive taxation: the corruption of the local government officials; and the necessary ex-territorial privileges of foreigners, which put it in the power of the unscrupulous to exploit the country for their own selfish purposes.

Palestine, in short, has been a land of turmoil from the early days of the Arab invasion: and that in its manifold disorders there could be any advance in civilization is unthinkable. The energy and skill that gave to the land the Dome of the Rock and the Mosque of the Omayyades in Damascus soon dwindled away, and the decline was never checked. The Crusaders were men of action rather than men of learning, and they had not the time, even if they had had the will, to foster art or civilization in the country. After they left, matters went steadily from bad to worse. To-day, even after the century of comparative peace which has elapsed, there seems to be scarcely the smallest comprehension of art in the Arab mind. The wretched daubs with which the Jerusalem Mosque was decorated, in preparation for the visit of H.I.M. the

German Emperor in 1898, are mournful witness to the fall from the high level on which was produced the Dome of the Rock.

In other directions civilization is at a standstill. The custom of holding village lands in common, distributed annually among the ploughmen by lot, is fatal to agricultural improvement. Old clumsy methods are followed, and probably not half the harvest is gathered that might be obtained. Of course there was, till yesterday, a further reason for this lack of enterprise; if the grounds of a village brought forth plentifully, under the old *régime*, the tax-gatherer would put an impost on the village far exceeding a due or just proportion. There was thus every discouragement offered to industry, and as Palestine must ultimately depend almost exclusively on its produce, the country at large suffered with the farmers. A total lack of public spirit or of patriotism was another prime cause of the want of progress. 'Every man for himself' was the ruling principle of the community.

On the other hand, public works of great importance have been carried out, in the face of many difficulties, within the last 25 years: such are the networks of roads which now intersect the country: the railways to Damascus, Jerusalem, and the Hijaz: the water-supply of Jerusalem: the establishment of settled towns at Beersheba, 'Amman, Jerash, etc.,

which (though the important ancient ruins at these places have been lamentably pulled about to supply materials for the new buildings) serve the useful purpose of outpost stations on the border of the territory of the nomads. All these are signs of progress. It is also true that various industries flourished, in spite of Government interference. The silk-weaving trade of Lebanon, the orange business at Jaffa, the soap factories at Nablus, these and others may be mentioned as goodly sources of income.

The native civilization, such as it is, is a painful illustration of the evils of what may be called unredeemed practicality. Listen to the conversation of two casual wayfarers: it is *always* about money, generally small sums, reckoned in *beshliks* (sixpences). *A* has sold a thing for so much—*B* has bought something else for so much—*C* has engaged himself as cook, and gets so much wages—*D* owes so much to *E*—*F* chiselled so much out of *G*—*H* is going to marry *K*'s daughter, and is paying so much for his bride—these are the staple subjects of conversation. The sole topic of interest is this single weariful subject of the relations of life reduced to one uniform standard of petty cash. A friend of the writer overheard a youth telling his companion that if he had a magic wishing-cap, he would desire a palace built of gold and silver bricks, with a delicious soft divan on which he would lie at his ease and do nothing all day but

smoke a water-pipe. The youth was a type. Riches, to gain the power of making display and the privilege of luxurious vacuous idleness—that is the aspiration of the town-bred Arab.

In such a community, the interests that to a western seem almost essential to the happiness of life are scarcely thought of. Literature is neglected; historical monuments are allowed to fall into ruin, to be taken down for building material, to be destroyed in one way or another, and no one cares; as for art, except delicate work turned out by the silversmiths and carpenters of Damascus, which can be highly praised, there is practically none. Nowhere can the mental blight caused by the love of money be more profitably studied.

One of the immediate consequences of the pacification of the country under Turkish rule has been the colonization of parts of the country by various communities of Europeans and Americans, and also the settlements of numerous individuals from those continents, either for trade or for philanthropic purposes. Primarily the religious interest underlies most of these establishments. Such is the case with the German 'Templar' colonies at Haifa, Jaffa, and Jerusalem, which have probably been the most successful of all. Living in sanitary houses and keeping regularly in touch with the Fatherland, they have resisted the enervating influence of the climate,

and have set a healthy example of industry to the communities among which they are placed. The Jewish agricultural colonies are now planted in considerable numbers. Some of these appear to be successful enough, others however have a sadly forlorn aspect. Mention should also be made of the monastic communities, which carry on a variety of useful labours. They are hospices, where pilgrims and other travellers are received, and so they facilitate journeys through the country. They are in some cases, especially in Jerusalem, homes of learning, where important scientific research of various kinds is carried on. They are charitable institutions, and they carry on valuable educational work. The houses of those orders which devote themselves to manual labour offer useful object-lessons in scientific farming.

It seems to be the special privilege of the Anglo-Saxon race, on both sides of the Atlantic, to send out what may be described as 'freak' colonies—communities of worthy people who have upset their mental balance by irresponsible speculations about the Number of the Beast and kindred dangerous topics. Of such colonies there has been a long succession. But to compensate for these eccentrics, it should be said with all emphasis that the officers of the various legitimate mission agencies of both countries are doing a noble work, ministering to the spiritual and bodily needs of the dwellers in the land.

It will thus readily be imagined that the population, especially in the cities, is mixed to an extent beyond anything that European lands can shew.

This chapter is headed 'Till Yesterday' for it brings the history down to the end of a period already closed. In August 1908 the news burst on the people like a bomb-shell that the movement so long going on among the Armenians and among the exiled 'Young Turkish' party had been crowned with success, that the long-execrated absolute monarchy was over, and that a constitutional government had been inaugurated. The scenes that took place were probably unprecedented in the whole history of the land. The news had been sent to the Governor of Jerusalem (as to the governors of the other Turkish provinces) announcing the establishment of a constitution. That representative of the old *régime* was startled, as well he might be: after consultation with his coadjutor, the Military Governor, they agreed to keep the news a secret, although the telegram contained express orders to publish it to the community without delay. A rumour leaked out, of course, that something had happened, and people began to come to the Governor's office to try to learn what it was. Not till the second day, however, did he consent to read

the telegram officially to the subordinates in his office: and through them news reached the town at large.

The whole town as one man then assembled, through the streets leading to the barracks, where speeches were made by the leading officials. Badges, with *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* printed upon them, mysteriously made their appearance and were hawked about for a halfpenny. And though the crowds were so great and the pressure in the narrow streets so close, not so much as a child was hurt on that happy day. Next the whole mob, Muslims, Jews, and Christians, went in a body to the Haram—the sacred enclosure of the Holy Rock, the ancient Temple Site, where without a permit and a military escort none save the followers of Muhammad dare set their foot—each singing the songs of their respective Faiths. For once there was neither Jew nor Greek—all alike were *Ottomans*! Supercilious old Muslim sheikhs and bigoted Jewish rabbis might be seen embracing in the streets. On all sides was heard the glad cry *hurrîyeh*—'liberty!'

A short six weeks later, people were beginning to look each other in the face and to ask apprehensively what was going to happen next. For the new-born 'liberty' was growing to a veritable Frankenstein's monster, with many-sided and unexpected energies. To give but one example: among other restrictions that had been removed in the first outburst of

enthusiasm was a wholesome regulation against the importation and sale of firearms—and now every shop was selling thousands of the latest and best pattern of revolver to whoever chose to purchase. Shepherd boys of ten years of age might be seen strutting about with a couple of these murderous weapons in their belts. Even grown-up possessors of such dangerous toys could not resist the amusement of letting them off like popguns at all hours of the day and night. Till the novelty wore off—*experto crede*—it was difficult to sleep at night in Jerusalem merely on account of the noise of firearms going off at all hours; and the danger of being hit by chance bullets was very considerable. All kinds of stories, some serious, some ridiculous, were being circulated, turning on the inconvenience arising from too suddenly granting liberty to a community not educated enough to distinguish that privilege from an illegitimate license. Throughout the country the sheikhs thought they saw their opportunity to regain the long suppressed power of their ancestors: and the consequent brawls filled the hospitals with wounded men. In the region of Samaria, for instance, the people of the village of Telluzeh raided the cattle of their neighbours in 'Asireh. A year before the people of the latter village would have gone to the Governor of Nablus, who would have quartered a soldier or two on the offenders—and these would

have made the life of the Telluzeh people such a burden that sooner or later they would have restored the cattle or their value, if only to get rid of the incubus. Rough justice, perhaps, but fitted for a rough people. But now, instead, the 'Asireh people went to the descendant of their ancient tribal sheikh, who led them out to a regular pitched battle with the Telluzites, where two or three men were killed.

All over the country the same story was told—an alarming outbreak of lawlessness and crime of all kinds. Many centuries of evolution will still be necessary before the Fellah or the Bedawy can be trusted without a despotic power to keep him in order.

The three years that have passed since the bold step was taken have been years full of anxiety for the Turkish executive, and doubtless years full of anxiety lie before them still. Their hopes and aspirations are, we doubt not, for the best; but the traditions of centuries of corruption and extortion on the one hand, of timidity or apathy on the other, and of selfishness on all sides, are not to be broken down because an old man was forced by circumstances to sign his name on a sheet of paper. Bold would he be who would venture to prophesy what a day may bring forth in the ancient land of Palestine.

But over the land, day and night, floats down from the minarets the musical chant of the muezzin —*Allah hu akbar! Allah hu akbar!*

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